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Electronic Entertainment

THE #1 INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

50 Future Games

Hotter Better Faster!

**Guided Tour:
Total Distortion**

**Get Hooked on the
Internet**

**Plus Reviews of
Hell, Gazillionaire, King's
Quest VII, Hardball IV,
CyberWar, and 49 more**

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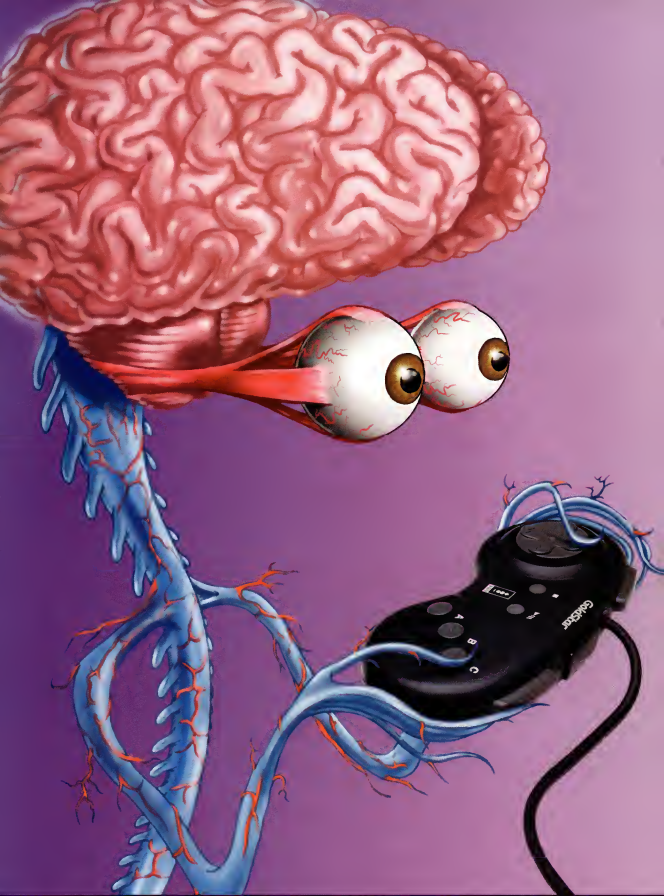
April 1995

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ON THE COVER:
A Guitar Warrior from Total Distortion



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Cosplay SHOTPC



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Internet addresses change faster than fashion trends. Find out how to keep up, page 90.



April 1995



Editor's Page

Fredric Paul

Alternative Rock

Rock and roll was supposed to be one of the "killer applications" that would drive mass acceptance of interactive CD-ROM entertainment. Big-name artists and even bigger record companies were salivating over their royalty checks before a single title hit the shelves.

They rang the dinner bell too soon. So far, interactive rock and roll hasn't even hit the charts. The first efforts typically served up steaming helpings of rock nostalgia, using multimedia to recapitulate the careers of established stars. But even with names like David Bowie, Peter Dinklage, ♯, Heart, and Bob Dylan on the boxes, the products—and their sales—have generally been lackluster. More importantly, they have failed to capture the public's imagination.

At the same time, interactive games have exploded out of the nerd ghetto into the mainstream of entertainment. Top computer-game titles like *Myst*, *Rebel Assault*, and *Doom II* sell hundreds of thousands of copies and earn millions of dollars.

Not surprisingly, musicians and game developers have tried to meld their disciplines, with mixed results. Rock tunes are starting to festoon game soundtracks, and one-time stars like Thomas Dolby and Todd Rundgren are writing music especially for games.

Somewhat, though, it all seems held together with chewing gum and Scotch tape. The music is usually little more than window dressing for the game (listen to *Road Rash*, for example), and occasionally is so annoying that you want to turn it off.

But a small San Francisco company called *Pop Rocket* is just now releasing its much-delayed title *Total Distortion* (see technical/games editor Christopher Lindquist's Guided Tour on page 46). Originally scheduled to debut for Christmas 1993—*E*² covered it in our inaugural January 1994 issue—*Total Distortion* is an adventure game about rock and roll. Backed with a manic punk/grunge/garage band soundtrack that adds extra oomph to the wild animation, your goal is to comb an alternate universe in search of footage to make rock videos. You're equipped with a virtual video camera and a way-cool editing suite.

The editing setup is so slick that many players may never get to *Total Distortion*'s game elements. Instead, they'll spend all their time holed up in the game's control tower mixing video and audio clips. You can save your video creations and send them to anyone who has the *Total Distortion* disc. A hip attitude and a loopy sense of humor make it lots more fun than "serious" video-editing tools.

Best of all, *Total Distortion*'s game play doesn't shy away from the musical metaphor. Instead of spells and swords, you wield an electric guitar and exchange power chords with nasty Guitar Warriors like the one on this month's cover. The spectacle of arena rock has finally found a literal expression.

I don't know if *Total Distortion* will be a big hit; it may turn out to be too much game for music lovers and much too musical for gamers. Even so, it's a smart, innovative approach that cleverly uses the technological sophistication of multimedia to break down genre barriers. A few more titles like this, and interactive rock may actually live up to its potential. In the meantime, *Total Distortion* is a blast to play.

FP

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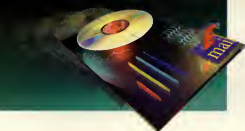
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Letters

Don't Hide the Dirt

Wow, it's nice to see an article that tells the truth about a test machine. Your magazine is the first I have seen to slam a Gateway computer ("The Lights Are On, But No One's Home," January 1995, page 22). All, and I mean all, other magazines write as if Gateway were their employer. It's not surprising, really. If someone gave me a brand new Pentium, I am not sure if I would kick it too much either.

However, it's good to learn that Gateway has mediocre tech support service and that the machine's sound card does not work in DOS. I am sure they must have known this. Even young, Doom-crazed users see these problems right away. Thanks for the honest article.

David Kallarz
Santa Rosa, CA

Clean & Uncluttered

I think your magazine is one of the best available for computer gaming. Your articles are consistently well-written, and your layout just gets better each issue. As a computer artist, I know how hard it is to balance layout, design, and legibility. Too many "cutting edge" magazines think that throwing everything into a huge montage and putting type over it is artistic. Sorry, guys, but it hurts my eyes to read tiny red type on a neon green background! Your magazine has a clean, uncluttered look that I find very appealing. Keep up the excellent work.

David Tanguay
New York, NY

Technology For Its Own Sake?

After I discovered games, I was amazed by the number of expensive titles that were hardly worth space in the trash can, while \$8 games off bookstore racks proved very entertaining. Commander Keen was and is one of the most entertaining series I've run into. I also like shareware and Apogee/d's products very much. They have provided me with many hours of fun.

I am reluctant to shell out \$50 for software that might disappoint—should I really have to risk half a C-note for a little fun? Does game software have to be so complicated? I have the same questions about productivity applications. After trying several modern word processors, I've returned to Spinnaker's Word Publisher 5.0. It does just what I need it to but is, unfortunately, no longer in print. I've given it to several friends who also found it easy and convenient to use.

My point is that software companies should reexamine what makes software usable and/or entertaining. While it's fine to push the limits of technology, there is little value in adding extra technology, just for its own sake. Games must, first and foremost, be fun and not cost a fortune.

Arthur M. Clark
Tyronne, NM

Make Your 3DO Voices Heard

All 3DO owners know that renting games is extremely difficult because there aren't many rental stores that carry 3DO titles. My solution is to call big rental operations like Blockbuster Video and Play Co Toys, who are considering carrying 3DO titles, and express your support for the 3DO. This is the best way to make our voices heard.

John Caldwell
Santee, CA

More Mac Carnage

I am a Mac owner who is seriously neglected. First, will Doom or Doom II ever come to the Mac? I have tried other first-person games like Marathon and Wolfenstein-3D, but they are not as good as Doom. And, in general, you don't review many Mac titles.

Also, I hate Myst. Could you try putting some different games on the Leader Board? I have all the games that are listed.

Ross Otto
Kentfield, CA

Relief is on the way. Doom II will be

available for the Power Mac from GT Interactive at the end of April. To respond to your other point, we try to review as many Mac titles as possible, but the market is dominated by DOS and Windows games. As developers release more Mac games, you will see more and more coverage in our game pages.

Finally, the selection and placement of titles in the Leader Board section is dictated by which products sell best in retail stores. The Board does not reflect which titles we feel are best. Check out the Editors' Choice Awards in the March issue (page 45) to get our opinions.

—Ed.

Devoured Your Magazine

I bought your magazine and devoured it looking for a new game. I have bought Myst and The 7th Guest. Now that I have completed both games, what else is new? I don't really like flight simulations, arcade games, shoot-'em-ups, or adult entertainment. When I finished Myst, it felt like the passing of a dear friend. Can you please assist me with my CD-ROM plight?

Dawn M. Michaud
Salem, MA

Violent games and various simulations dominate the industry, but there are plenty of exceptions. If you loved Myst, look into Gadget from Synergy, a beautifully rendered Japanese mystery game that opts for film noir ambiance rather than mayhem and destruction. Millennium Auction is another innovative and nonviolent title that simulates the high-stakes world of modern art collection. You'll also be happy to learn that Myst II from Cyan is in the making.

—Ed.

Got something you want to get off your chest? Do it! Write, fax, or e-mail us at: Letters to the Editor, c/o Electronic Entertainment, 951 Mariner's Island Blvd., Suite 700, San Mateo, CA 94404; fax: 415-349-7781; Internet address, e2@etw.com; MCI ID: 619-7340; and CompuServe: 73361, 265.



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Cinderella from Discs Knowledge Research: The flexibility and range of options built into Discs Books makes them an adventure in learning. Very simple to use, just point and click. Includes music and sound effects!



Lenny's Music Toons from Paramount Interactive: This CD-ROM is designed to familiarize children with music by making music approachable and fun. Explore sound, harmony, and express yourself creatively through music!



Family Circus (Our House) from Context Systems: You can travel room to room and back and forth through time with the characters of The Family Circus. There are 400 stories; your children will love them all!



Putt-Putt's Fun Pack from Humongous Entertainment: Putt-Putt's Fun Pack includes six fascinating games designed to improve your child's ability to think ahead. Also includes 3-D puzzles to heighten their reasoning skills.



Sing Along Kids from Sirius Publishing: Bring your family together for hours of nonstop fun, and build your child's self-confidence. You'll sing songs loved by generations of children, each recorded by professional musicians and orchestrated in 24 to 32 track stereo.



Basic Spelling Tricks from Sierra On-Line: This program uses proven learning methods to improve your child's spelling skills. You and Yobi go on a spelling journey to save all of Africa's creatures from the flood!



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To The Power of
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SHARP

Marilyn Mania

Think of Hollywood, and you probably conjure up the MGM lion, maybe the landmark sign on the side of the hill, and most likely Marilyn Monroe. But think multimedia, and it's doubtful Norma Jean will ring a bell. That may change later this year with the release of two products dedicated to the silver-screen legend—one focusing on her mysterious death, the other on her life

and prodigious career.

Hard Evidence: The Marilyn Monroe Files puts you at the head of an investigation into Monroe's alleged 1962 suicide. You take on the role of a reporter, police chief, coroner, or district attorney as you sort through the evidence and puzzle over the most popular death theories. **Hard Evidence** also gives players a glimpse into American life during the '60s, with photographs, film clips, and videos from the era. (WordPerfect Main Street; 800-451-5151; not yet priced)

If you're more interested in Monroe's movie career,



October will see the release of Fox Interactive's **Living Biography of Marilyn Monroe** for CD-i and Sega Saturn. A PC version is under development. The title will feature text and photos, along with video clips of her films. (Fox Interactive; 310-203-3300; not yet priced)

—Christine Grech

Hard Evidence: The Marilyn Monroe Files
Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Ship Date: April

Living Biography of Marilyn Monroe
Platform: CD-i, Sega Saturn
Ship Date: October

Up a Lazy River

Get set to head for the steamy Nile this spring when the Discovery Channel releases **Nile: Passage to Egypt**. You'll navigate up the

Next stop:
the Pyramids.



fabled river by boat, then take to shore to investigate ancient sites. Once on the sandy land, you can take a 3-D animated tour of the Temples of Ramses II. And the fantastic journey doesn't end once you turn off your computer: The disc's release will coincide with the premiere of the Discovery Channel miniseries *The Nile: River of Gods*. (Discovery Channel; 301-986-0444; not yet priced)

—Bill Meyer

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Ship Date: Spring

A Screen Saver with an Attitude

If you're bored with your ho-hum screen saver, how's about something a little, well, twisted? That's what you'll find in Berkeley Systems' **The Totally Twisted Screen Saver**, available this month. The 12-module program features offbeat animated screens that just might help you vicariously relieve a little stress—and that are surely guaranteed to make you laugh.

Set your sights on those annoying silent guys in *Mime Hunt*, get airborne



A little light viewing in *The Totally Twisted Screen Saver*.



We have ways of making you talk...

with the Flying Toilets, or expose yourself to the Clock Flasher. There are nine other whacked-out scenes as well, but you'll have to check out *Phlegm Boy* and *Toxic Swamp* for yourself. Words just don't do them justice. (Berkeley Systems; 510-540-5535; \$29)

—Christine Grech

Platform: Windows/Mac
Ship Date: April

Do-It-Yourself CD-ROMs



ILLUSTRATION BY ARTIST J. LUDMAN

Okay, so it would be cool to make your own game, have it become a blockbuster hit, and then retire as a millionaire. You may not have the programming and creative talent, but at least the technology is finally available at a more reasonable price. We're talking about CD-Recordable (CD-R), the ability to write to a CD-ROM disc in much the same way you copy files to floppy diskettes.

Creative Labs is among the first to offer CD-R to consumers. Targeted at less than \$2,000, its **Digital Edge CD-R** is by no means cheap, but look for the price to drop to around \$1,000 by the end of the year as demand increases and competition heats up. Speaking of competition, Philips Media is rumored to

be working on a sub-\$500 CD-R unit. Other companies jumping on the bandwagon with units in the \$2,000 range: JVC, MicroNet, Pinnacle Micro, Ricoh, and Smart & Friendly. Of course, blank CD-R discs still cost \$10 to \$15 each.

Creative's Digital Edge looks and works like a regular CD-ROM drive, but uses special software for saving all the data to disc. It typically takes about 45 minutes for a PC to copy all the information to disc.

With the ability to store 600MB of data on a single disc, CD-R's potential is limitless. Musicians can make their own audio CDs, artists and doodlers can easily store unwieldy graphic files, and almost anyone can archive documents or photos on disc. Best of all,

you can finally distribute your game and multimedia creations to anyone with a CD-ROM drive. (Creative Labs; 800-988-5227; not yet priced)

—Christine Grech

Platform: PC
Ship Date: Spring

The Ol' Soft Shoe

When it comes to erotica, do you like to watch or play? If it's the latter, you're in luck. Showtime's **Red Shoe Diaries** is being adapted for CD-ROM by creator Zalman King and Magnet Interactive Studios.

The software fantasy series by King—best known for writing and producing the film *9½ Weeks*—typically features provocative sexual encounters between strangers, who then tell their stories in response to an ad by Jake, the mysterious keeper of the diaries (portrayed by David Duchovny of *The X-Files*). Magnet will use content and outtakes from the Showtime episodes, as well as footage shot specifically for the interactive product.

The focus will be on creating new storylines with both new and existing scenes, using diary accounts as the entry points to the rest of the CD. Magnet also plans to have an online component of the Red Shoe project that would allow users to create their own diary entries and link them with story modules, as well as clicking on links to access products shown within the CDs. There is no date yet for the CD-ROM release, which will focus first on Windows users and then follow with a Macintosh version, Magnet creative director Greg Johnson said. (Magnet Interactive Studios; 202-625-1111; not yet priced)

—Donald St. John

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD

Binary Bard

CD or not CD? That is the question. Seems that the new technology has proven irresistible to fans of the classics. In the past few months, we've seen every great literary figure from Frankenstein to Edgar Allan Poe squeezed onto the diminutive discs. Now get ready for **Discovering Shakespeare**, which promises a well-rounded introduction to the great author and his time. The disc will include synopses of Shakespeare's many plays, some scattered intellectual discussions (including such burning issues as "Are there hidden cryptograms in his plays?"), and a bio of the Bard.

The recollections of his contemporaries promise to be hidden jewels. We learn, for instance, that Shakespeare worked as a butcher when he was young and seemed to enjoy playing with knives. "When he killed a Calf, he would do it with a high style and make a Speech," wrote one acquaintance. These snippets promise to breathe life into a figure too often dehydrated



Friends, Romans, multimedia fans, lend me your ears.

by the weight of academia. Unfortunately, this celebration of the man and his times lacks what made the man famous—his words. It doesn't have a complete play for you to read. But it should make a nice companion to, say, Voyager's in-depth *Macbeth* title. (IVI Publishing; 800-432-1332; \$59.95)

—James Daly

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Ship Date: Spring

SHARP
EDGE

NEWSFLASH

■ Philips Media and Ardent Records have signed a deal to create a series of discs playable both on your home stereo and your personal computer. The first two **AudioVision** CDs, distributed through Polygram, feature



the newly signed Little Rock, Arkansas-based alternative bands 2 Minutes Hate and Techno-Squid Eats Parliament. A disc from Ireland's Cranberries is also due by summer. For kids, Philips has inked singer Diana Ross to narrate *Treasures of Oz*. As Glinda the Good Witch, the former Supreme and star of *The Wiz* will lead kids into L. Frank Baum's world of Oz, enhanced with games. Look for the disc this summer on PC, Mac, and CD-i. (Philips/Polygram; 800-340-7888; Mac CD, \$17.99)

■ Apple Computer has finally begun to license its **QuickTime VR** technology. The cross-platform software lets developers create slick, highly rendered environments that allow users to zoom in or out of a scene, explore in all directions, and even pick up and inspect objects. QuickTime VR first showed up in Simon & Schuster's best-selling *Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual* (November 1994, page 54), and was used by NBC news in the O.J. Simpson trial to let viewers explore the crime scene. Other early adopters of the technology include Sumner, which is using

continued on page 14

All The Star Trek You Can Handle

Following close on the heels of the best-selling *Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual*, the new **Star Trek Omnipedia** is the last word in Trekker arca.

Based on the books *The Star Trek Encyclopedia* and *Star Trek Chronology*, the Omnipedia reprises the Technical Manual's interface and adds a new wrinkle. Just like on the Enterprise, you can control your computer by talking to it using the built-in voice recognition feature.

Instead of just *The Next Generation*, the Omnipedia has the goods on everything from the original series to the movies and even the recent *Star Trek: Voyager* television series. You'll learn just about everything there is to know about the Federation, the Klingons, the Cardassians, and other denizens of Gene Roddenberry's vision.

Trekkers will wallow in more than 6,000 entries, 1,500 photos, 300 audio clips, an



The *Star Trek Omnipedia* has all the facts on all your favorite characters—including Dax from *Deep Space 9*.

hour of QuickTime video, and an interactive timeline of the show's vision of future history. There are even plans for online updates. All the data is hyperlinked, so it's easy to follow your interests wherever they lead.

The Omnipedia's voice recognition is limited to English, but your CD-ROM drive can also teach you Klingon. Check out **Klingon Immersion Studies** for a Holodeck simulation designed to let you chat with Lt. Worf in his native tongue. The title will use original footage of several *Star Trek* personalities combined with material from the book *The Klingon Dictionary*, *Conversational Klingon*, and *Power Klingon*. (Simon & Schuster Interactive; 800-223-2336; \$79.95 each)

—Fredric Paul

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Ship Date: *Star Trek Omnipedia*, June;
Klingon Immersion Studies, fall



Let's Go Crazy

Stress can be a good thing—sometimes. A little nervous tension can certainly get the creative juices flowing, but too much will turn you into a raving lunatic. Before those petty little annoyances turn you into a threat to Western civilization, check out *Stress: 21 Things You Need To Know*, due this spring from Britain's Media Design Interactive. Family doctor Steven Scott-Perry gets to the root of the problem by examining time management (or lack thereof), diet, and exercise. You fill out a questionnaire, and the good doctor recommends changes in your eating and exercise habits to burn off tension and keep your body and mind healthy. (Media Design Interactive; 44-252-737630; Win/Mac CD, \$39) —Joy I. Ma

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Ship Date: April

You can hear your breath,
your boots pounding on metal stairs.
There's only one way out.

20 more feet...15...10.

You're almost there when suddenly
from out of nowhere
an 8-foot-tall green alien drops down
and lunges at you with a spear, leaving you
approximately .08 seconds to act.

This may be a good time to
mention the superior processing speed
of a Power Macintosh.



For vastly superior game play, arm yourself with a Power Macintosh[®] computer. It offers better graphics, smoother animation* and, in some cases, the chance to meet those from cultures intriguingly unlike your own.



Power Macintosh



In fact, games for Power Macintosh are like nothing on this planet. But see for yourself. Call 800-538-9696, and we'll be happy to tell you where you can get into a game. But not, alas, how to get out of it.



*When compared to the same games running on 68K-powered Macintosh[®] computers. © 1995 Apple Computer, Inc. All rights reserved. Apple, the Apple logo and Macintosh are registered trademarks and Power Macintosh is a trademark of Apple Computer, Inc. The product names and logos of all games featured are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies. All games sold separately.

SHARP
EDGEOff-Ramps
Online

NEWSFLASH

from page 12

it to help create its forthcoming **Exploring the Ruins of the Lost Maya** disc. (Sumeria; 800-478-6374)

■ Chip maker Brooktree has been showing off some impressive media accelerator technology that should be appearing soon in a variety of sound, graphics, and video cards for PCs. The technology combines video acceleration for formats such as AVI, MPEG, and Indeo; helps sync sound and video; and supplies wavetable audio, video capture, windows graphics acceleration, and live-video input—all for about \$350. (Brooktree; 800-228-2777)

■ Sony and Microsoft are teaming up to create the hardware and software necessary for interactive television. The hefty twosome hope to start building TV set-top terminals that will deliver instant video on demand and sell for less than \$300. No date on when the units will ship, though. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Sony; 800-342-5721)

■ Digital cameras are getting better and cheaper. The **Chinon Electronic Still Camera** (ESC), due out this fall, will capture images up to 640-by-480 resolution in full 24-bit color. The unit will include infrared autofocus and will download images to both PCs and Macs. A built-in flash, variable speed shutter, zoom lens, and optical viewfinder complete the picture. (Chinon America; 800-441-0222; PC/Mac, approximately \$1000) Also, Casio is working on the **QV-10** handheld digital camera, which will sport a 1.8-inch liquid crystal screen and will let you view up to 98 pictures on the screen, download them to a PC or Mac, watch them on TV, or store them on a VCR. (Casio; 800-992-2746; PC/Mac, \$699)

continued on page 16



Track sporting events on AOL's ABC Sports area, and get the play-by-play for Monday Night Football.

Barring strikes, earthquakes and corked bats, baseball is finally getting ready to start up again. If you want to keep your finger on the game's electronic pulse, head online.

One of the best forums for discussing baseball is Delphi's **Sports Connection Online**. It not only offers the typical bulletin board-style messaging areas, file libraries, and real-time chat sections, but its menu-based Internet links let you hook up to diverse sources of sports-related fare. Type **GO GRO SP** to get there from most Delphi prompts.

SportsLink (keyword: SPORTS) and **ABC Sports** (keyword: ABC SPORTS) are the hot spots on America Online for athletic info. On CompuServe, type **GO SPORTS** for a menu of sport-related areas. If you want to chat with other sports enthusiasts, type **GO FANS**.

The **World Wide Web** (WWW) is a great place to keep up on the sporting life. Check out **The News and Observer** from North Carolina, which posts its sports stories as

North Carolina's News and Observer newspaper does out up-to-the-minute sports reports from its own pages.



they are filed by the paper's writers. Find it at <http://www.nando.net/newsroom/nts/sports.html>. Then there's the **World Wide Web of Sports**, a great launching point to other WWW sports pages. Find it at <http://tms-www.lcs.mit.edu/cgi-bin/sports/>. The WWW of Sports offers pages for baseball, hockey, and football, plus more esoteric sports like Ultimate Frisbee and cricket.

Finally, **Usenet** offers a wealth of sporting newsgroups. There's a slew of rec.sport.* groups, as well as team-by-team groups under the alt.sport.* and alt.sports.* monikers. You'll have a ball.

—Andy Eddy

What A Tangled Web We Weave

Two dynamics are set to change the online services industry over the next five years: rapid growth in the number of people connected, and a shift away from proprietary online services such as America Online, Prodigy, and CompuServe toward the Internet's World Wide Web.

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.



Millions Connected	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Proprietary Online	4.7	7.2	9.4	10.0	9.6	8.3	6.7
World Wide Web	2.0	2.0	5.4	7.5	11.2	16.7	21.9
Total	6.7	10.0	14.8	17.5	20.8	25.0	28.6

There you are, flying through the air
with the greatest of ease when
the air-to-air missile locks on you
and starts homing in. Let it close to 4 miles.
Roll 90 degrees into it and start laying chaff
and flares like crazy. It's still coming.
Keep turning. G forces. Everything's going black.
Turn harder or you're dog meat.
You're dog meat.

Even a Power Macintosh
can't do everything.



Games for the Power Macintosh* computer have better graphics and smoother animation.* Thanks to the sizzling processing speed of the PowerPC* chip, they also deliver dismally timely, realistic payloads.



Power Macintosh



To find out where you can take a test run, give us a call at 800-538-9696. Then go strap yourself into the cockpit of an F/A-18, and be prepared. The animation won't jump, but you may have to.



When compared to the same games running on 68K-powered Macintosh computers. © 1995 Apple Computer, Inc. All rights reserved. Apple, the Apple logo and Macintosh are registered trademarks and Power Macintosh is a trademark of Apple Computer, Inc. PowerPC is a trademark of International Business Machines Corporation, used under license herefrom. The product names and logos of all games featured are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies. All games sold separately.

SHARP
EDGE

NEWSFLASH

from page 14

■ There's a new cube on the block. **Virtus Cube**—a joint venture of Simon & Schuster and Virtus—is a combination screen saver and desk organizer. You can put different images on each of the spinning cube's six faces, and attach any of 20 built-in applications, utilities, or games to each face. Grab and rotate the cube to find the program you want. Additional apps may be sold separately. Virtus Cube will rotate onto your screen in June. (Simon & Schuster Interactive; 800-983-5333; Win/Mac, \$39.95)

■ The San Francisco-based Hispanic Community Fund of the Bay Area has jumped onto the Internet with a nonprofit online network especially for the Latino community. **LatinoNet** is a private forum accessible through America Online that features e-mail, a Latino-based national events calendar, a nonprofit agency directory, census and demographic information, news, arts, and cultural issues. LatinoNet also plans to launch a public forum on AOL. Individual subscriptions to LatinoNet are \$60 a year (in addition to AOL's subscription fees); there are also special rates for nonprofit groups and institutions. (LatinoNet; 800-452-8460; Win/Mac, \$60/year)

■ Quad-speed CD-ROM is fast, and now it's getting cheap. Chiron America will ship its new **CDS-545 quad-speed drive** this spring with a street price of less than \$200, compared to more than \$400 for most of today's 4x units. The CDS-545 boasts a 630KB/sec data transfer rate and 230 ms average access time, and it accelerates the disc to six times normal speed during seeks for a 185ms average seek time. It also includes a propri-

continued on page 17

Star Talk With Shelley Duvall

Shelley Duvall made her name as an actress on the silver screen in such well-known bits and belly flops as *The Shining* and *Popeye*. But she's also a multimedia pioneer. *Shelley Duvall's It's A Bird's Life* was one of the first 3D titles, and she recently followed up with a spin-off CD-ROM, *Shelley Duvall Presents Digby's Adventures: Tale of a 1-Pound Dog*. Electronic Entertainment contributor Jane Greenstein caught up with her as Duvall explained how she's able to morph from one medium to another.

E2: Do you have more or less freedom with CD-ROM technology than you did making movies?

Shelley Duvall: In film, you never have enough money to do that one big effect. I find I have so much more at my fingertips with computers. The techies just program it.

E2: Are you disappointed with

the effects produced by CD-ROM, compared to what you can do with film?

SD: Once software came out, people expected top-quality effects. CD-ROM has become extremely sophisticated. With virtual reality, for instance, you'll see the same effects as you do in film. Now there's a tool that can make animals look furry (on the computer). If Picasso and Da Vinci were around, they'd be using these tools.

E2: How involved are you with



Shelley Duvall accompanies her chapeau downtown.

the actual production of the CD-ROM?

SD: It's the same as producing TV, in that you go from something in its earliest form to its most sophisticated. I write the stories, then develop it with the software people. It's much more collaborative than TV. CD-ROM is the equivalent of TV product with text.

E2: Where can it go?

SD: As far as an artist can take it. CD-ROM drives are doubling, tripling in speed—that'll open up a lot of opportunity.

E2: Your TV specials and videos are primarily aimed at children. How do you see them using computer technology?

SD: Children adapt more easily than adults do to this technology. As far as kids spending more time at a computer or with video games to the exclusion of other activities, I don't think it will happen. With computers, learning is sped up—they can learn at home.

PHOTOGRAPH BY SPENCER WINTERHILL/GETTY IMAGES

On the Road Again



The portable CD-Express 1200e gives you double-speed access on the road.

If you are looking for a portable CD-ROM drive, take a gander at the **CD-Express 1200e** from Advanced Logic Research.

The base model double-speed drive supports enhanced IDE (Integrated Drive Electronics) to ease compatibility woes. The unit can be upgraded for better sound, PCMCIA compatibility, and CD video playback. ALR's CD-Express with a data/sound base setup includes a 16-bit sound card, MIDI game port, and a "fimo-in" port for \$349. The PCMCIA model for connecting CD-Express to a notebook computer runs about \$549. (ALR; 800-444-4257; \$249 and up)

—Bill Meyer

Platform: PC notebooks
Ship Date: Immediate

NEWSFLASH

from page 16

etary caching scheme designed to accelerate three-dimensional rendering in games like Doom II and Magic Carpet. (Chiron America; 800-441-0222; PC, street price \$199)

■ World Library has signed a deal with the Library of Congress to create **California As I Saw It: First Person Narratives of California's Early Years, 1849-1900**. The CD-ROM collects the contents of 192 books digitized by the Library's American Memory Project. The disc is scheduled to ship late in 1995. (World Library; 800-443-0238; Win CD, not yet priced)

■ The biggest problem with most 3-D display technologies is that you have to strap an awkward high-tech visor on your head and be totally cut off from your surroundings. Dimensional Media Associates' **High Definition Volumetric Display (HDVD)** solves the problem by projecting a high-quality, holographic image into space, viewable from almost any angle. The HDVD tricks the eye into seeing a 3-D image by using "psychological depth cues" (i.e., by making nearby objects well-defined while making distant objects less clear). The result is a realistic 3-D object floating in space. HDVD will probably first be used for in-store advertising kiosks, and then will move into the consumer market. The display's projector enclosure can stretch as far as 20 feet across, with vertical and horizontal fields of view of 10 to 120 degrees—meaning full-scale, movie-house-size installations are possible. The company is also investigating using the technology for arcade-based video games and computer-display terminals. (Dimensional Media; 212-685-8375)

Send In the Clones

Macintosh aficionados have long felt cramped by having to rely on a single source of hardware. But Apple hopes to change all that with its Open Macintosh licensing program, which will allow computer makers to design **Power Mac system clones** that will run all your favorite Mac programs and a whole lot more.



Ta-dah! The Radius Mac clone is on the way.

Three companies are currently licensed by Apple to produce Macintosh clones. Radius is working on a prototype for a video workstation. Power Computing also has a clone in the works, and other manufacturers are expected to follow, either with generic or specialized systems. Cutting Edge is

rushing a licensed clone to market that uses Apple boards inside a proprietary box. The system competes with the Quadra 630 and costs less than \$1000 (without a monitor).

The new licensing deals will create a wider selection of hardware and software, lower prices and better customer service. The licensing program coincides with a

larger agreement between Apple, IBM, and Motorola to develop a common hardware platform to run DOS, Windows, OS/2, UNIX, and Mac software on a single system. (Radius; 408-541-6100; Power Computing; 408-526-0500; Cutting Edge; 800-257-1666)

—Ann M. Marcus

Point of Reference

Who needs another encyclopedia or atlas on CD-ROM? You just might after you get a look at DK Multimedia's upcoming trio of reference products. All three share similar interfaces and rich graphics, and the company set high standards with its premiere products last fall.

The **DK World Reference Atlas** is a combination atlas/encyclopedia, with more than 600 new maps from Dorling Kindersley's Cartography Division. You can use the program's magnification feature to zoom in and get a detailed look at each map, or peruse vital statistics, pull up text articles, and view photos and videos.

For a different look at the world, **The Eyewitness History of the World** travels through time, not space. It covers human happenings from late B.C. up to the pre-

Travel the world with the DK Reference Atlas.



Become an Eyewitness to the world's amazing creatures and of plants.

sent day. As you progress through history, the program's interface changes to reflect the appropriate era.

Finally, **The Eyewitness Encyclopedia of Nature** applies the same treatment to the natural world's myriad plants and animals. (DK Multimedia; 212-213-4800; \$49.95 each)

—Christine Grech

Platform: Win CD
Ship Date: April

Leader

The best-selling PC, Mac, and CD-ROM entertainment software



Set up leagues, buy teams, coach players, and throw the TDs in **Front Page Sports: Football Pro '95**.



Fly high-performance jets over the Middle East in **F/A-18 Hornet**.



Hard-boiled gumshoe Tex Murphy is back in **Under a Killing Moon**.

The Leader Board is a compilation of top-selling software in 1,300 retail stores for November 1994. Some titles may appear in more than one category. Source: PC Data.

PC GAMES

- 1 Doom II** The hair-raising sequel to Doom, with more than 30 levels of mayhem, 7 new hellish creatures, and a super shotgun for lots of unfriendly fire. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS CD, \$59.95)
- 2 Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and intriguing puzzles keep this unique adventure game near the top of the Leader Board. (Bruderbund; 800-521-6263; Win CD, \$55)
- 3 5 ft. 10 Pak, Volume Two** The second bargain-priced ten-disc compilation of games and multimedia titles, including Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective and Home Medical Advisor. (Sirius Publishing; 800-247-0307; DOS CD/Win CD, \$39.95)
- 4 Front Page Sports: Football Pro '95** Create your own league and
- learn, then play an entire season. It features all the players from the NFL Players' Association, authentic playbooks, and bone-crushing action. (Sierra On-Line; 800-757-7707; DOS, \$54.95; DOS CD, \$59.95)
- 5 Under a Killing Moon** Detective Tex Murphy is back in another sordid tale of intrigue. This one stars Brian Keith and Margot Kidder. (Access; 800-800-4800; DOS CD, \$99.95)
- 6 SimCity 2000** Build your city of the future with this improved version of the classic urban-simulation game. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; DOS/Windows, \$69.95)
- 7 Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual** Check out a hand phaser, sit in the Captain's chair, and examine Picaards
- jammies as you wander the halls, cabins, and decks of the *Enterprise*. (Simon & Schuster Interactive; 800-983-5333; Win CD, \$69.95)
- 8 Metaltech: EarthSiege** Go mano-a-mano inside battle robots armed to the teeth in a futuristic duel to the death. (Dynamic; 800-757-7707; DOS, \$59.95; DOS CD, \$69.95)
- 9 The 7th Guest** The ghost of Henry Stauf just won't go away in this realistic and haunting puzzler. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; DOS CD, \$60)
- 10 Rebel Assault** Intense 3-D graphics and furious action highlight this *Star Wars* action/adventure. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; DOS CD, \$49.95)

MAC GAMES

- 1 Myst** Stunning visuals, haunting audio, and intriguing puzzles keep this unique adventure game at the top of the Mac list. It's been No. 1 for months. (Bruderbund; 800-521-6263; Mac CD, \$55)
- 2 SimCity 2000** Build your city of the future with this improved version of the classic urban-simulation game. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Mac, \$54.95)
- 3 Rebel Assault** Intense 3-D graphics and furious action highlight this *Star Wars* action/adventure. (LucasArts Entertainment; 800-782-7927; Mac CD, \$49.95)
- 4 F/A-18 Hornet** As many as four players can fly missions over the Middle East at the controls of state-of-the-art jets in this networked flight
- simulation. *F/A-18 Hornet* makes its second appearance on the Mac list. (Graphic Simulations; 800-255-6227; Mac, \$49)
- 5 Links Pro Macintosh** Photorealistic courses and players as well as humorous sound bites highlight this ground-breaking golf game. (Access; 800-800-4800; Mac, \$60)

CD-ROM TITLES

- 1 Doom II** The hair-raising sequel to Doom, with 30 levels of mayhem, 7 new hellish creatures, and a super shotgun for lots of unfriendly fire. (GT Interactive; 800-332-4300; DOS CD, \$59.95)
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- 4 Quicken CD-ROM Deluxe** The popular home finance program, which
- helps you balance your checkbook and manage your finances, on CD-ROM. (Intuit; 800-624-9060; Win CD, \$49.95)
- 5 Under a Killing Moon** Detective Tex Murphy is back in another sordid tale of intrigue. This one stars Brian Keith and Margot Kidder. (Access; 800-800-4800; DOS CD, \$99.95)
- 6 Star Trek: The Next Generation Interactive Technical Manual** Check out a hand phaser, sit in the Captain's chair, and examine Picaards' jammies as you wander the halls, cabins, and decks of the *Enterprise*. (Simon & Schuster Interactive; 800-983-5333; Win CD/Mac CD, \$69.95)
- 7 Microsoft Encarta** Experience the world through video segments, audio clips, animation, and text in this high-
- tech encyclopedia. (Microsoft; 800-426-9400; Win CD/Mac CD, \$130)
- 8 Disney's Animated Story Book: The Lion King** Despite widely publicized problems with bugs, the interactive storybook based on the animated hit movie cracks the CD-ROM list. (Disney Interactive; 800-688-1520; credit card only; Win CD, \$30)
- 9 Metaltech: EarthSiege** Go mano-a-mano inside battle robots armed to the teeth in a futuristic duel to the death. (Dynamic; 800-757-7707; DOS/DOS CD, \$69.95)
- 10 The Print Shop Deluxe CD Ensemble** Five easy-to-use desktop publishing applications bundled on one disc. (Bruderbund; 800-521-6263; Win CD/Mac CD, \$80)

Explore The Secrets Of An Ancient Civilization Lost In Time.

Discis Entertainment presents
an ELOI Production

Jewels of the Oracle

Resolve the tasks set before you
and go on to greatness.
Fail and be lost forever!



Indulge yourself in a 3-D animated world, with seductive music, captivating sounds and oracular voices.



Discover hidden chambers and test your skills of logic and reason with interactive and intricate puzzles.



Unlock the fascinating secrets of an ancient and long forgotten civilization.

CD-ROM GAME FOR WINDOWS AND MACINTOSH
AVAILABLE NOW AT YOUR FAVORITE RETAILER OR CALL 1-800-567-4321

Actual screen images from the game.

Spotlight

COMMUNICATIONS EXPERT



AT&T's Globallyst 360TPC believes in business before pleasure.

AT&T Goes Global

You know that AT&T makes phones and sells long-distance, but you might not remember that the company also makes multimedia personal computers.

For AT&T, PC multimedia means Windows multimedia. Its **Globallyst 360TPC** not only does sound, graphics, and video, but it also exploits its corporate heritage to add voice mail, fax and data transmission, and even a full-duplex (both people can talk at once) speakerphone. These features work effectively, however, only under Windows—and that spells real trouble for DOS game players.

The Globallyst is a traditional component system—a separate CPU and monitor. The clearly illustrated Getting Started guide makes the setup process relatively simple. Unlike several other manufacturers, though, AT&T doesn't label or color-code its cables and connectors.

The Globallyst's motherboard comes standard with a 66MHz 486DX2 processor, but it can also accept DX4 and Pentium Overdrive upgrade chips, providing a relatively straightforward upgrade path. Its mini-tower case has three avail-

able ISA expansion slots and a single open VESA local-bus slot. That's critical for upgrading the sound board, modem, or video card, and if you buy this machine to play DOS games and multimedia titles, you'll probably need to do just that.

The problem is that AT&T has packed all the sound/fax/modem/voice mail functions onto a single card. This space-saving multipurpose card may seem ideal, but the all-in-one design limits what you can do simultaneously. For example, if you try to send a fax while you're playing a MIDI file under Windows, the Globallyst serves up an error message. Even worse, you can't run the modem at all under DOS, so modern-to-modern competition in games such as *Descent* and *Doom II* is off-limits. And while the sound card portion supports 8-bit Sound Blaster compatibility under DOS (with no volume controls on the card or the speakers), many of today's games sound much better with 16-bit DOS or wavetable sound support. Unfortunately, you get neither with the Globallyst.

In all other respects, however, the Globallyst 360TPC is more than adequate. In addition to the fast 486 chip, it features 8MB of RAM; a 420MB hard drive; a double-

speed CD-ROM drive; that combination 192 Kbps data/14.4 Kbps fax/voice mail/speakerphone/16-bit sound card; and a pair of small but cool-looking powered speakers (which put out respectable sound). There's also a built-in microphone and a local-bus graphics card. An AT&T 14-inch Super VGA monitor adds \$300 to the whole tariff.

You also get more than a dozen software titles (although no hot DOS games), including PFS: WindowsWorks, the AAA Trip Planner, Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia, and software for several commercial online services such as CompuServe and America Online.

The Globallyst has its virtues as a full-featured home-office center, but the system lacks the flexibility to be a top-notch game and multimedia machine. AT&T is working on an upgraded version of the Globallyst that will include a 16-bit sound card and a modem that works under DOS. The New Globallyst might just become a real contender for gamers. (AT&T; 800-225-5627; \$1,899 plus \$300 for 14-inch monitor)

—Christopher Lindquist

Format: PC
Rating: ★ ★

PHOTOGRAPH BY WENDY CLARK

Run, Run, Fast As You Can...

Mix up a few cups of dough, spice with pulsing electronic rhythms, and ice with some crisp animation. Pop it in your CD-ROM drive and serve up **Gingerbread Man**, a new CD-ROM from San Francisco's sultans of sonic psychosis, The Residents.

The disc is one of a new breed of CDs that offer both a full slab of music for your stereo and some visual treats for your personal computer. So, you can enjoy the eerie grooves on your DiscMan and experience fantastically creepy visuals on your PC.

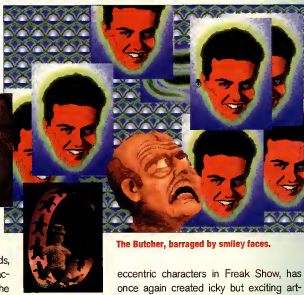
Gingerbread Man isn't a game, but rather an abstract mind romp. The interface is ambiguous and frequently bewildering (the programmers gleefully acknowledge that key functions may not play the same way twice), but also strangely compelling. Create your own recipes by scrambling images,



Look deep into the eyes of a terminal tycoon.

colors, backgrounds, and words that accompany each of the nine songs. As with The Residents' first CD-ROM title *Freak Show*, half the fun in *Gingerbread Man* is the voyeuristic thrill of peering into the deepest mental recesses of some seriously warped individuals: a lonely old woman, a butcher, an aging musician, a dying oil tycoon, a confused transsexual.

Illustrator Jim Ludtke, who created the



The Butcher, harried by smiley faces.

Can't catch me...

eccentric characters in *Freak Show*, has once again created icky but exciting artwork. You'll enjoy the trip into *Gingerbread Man*'s uniquely weird world. Just be sure to bring at least 8MB of RAM and to stay away from large glasses of milk. (lon; 310-312-8060; \$49.95)

—James Daly

Format: Win CD/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Hip Trip

The year was 1967. The Age of Aquarius was dawning. And Timothy Leary was uttering the simple phrase that would become the mantra of a whole generation: "Tune in, turn on, drop out." If you weren't around in those days, or you were and want to rekindle your fond memories, check out **Haight-Ashbury in The Sixties**, the new CD-ROM from Rockument.

The disc imaginatively weaves together the many strands that formed San Francisco's love-laden, drug-enhanced, heady culture of the sixties. Music and video of the era are mixed with the lucid narration of Beat/bohemian poet Allen Cohen, once editor of the groundbreaking alternative paper *The San Francisco Oracle*. The colorful psychedelic poster art is authentic and evocative.

In fact, there are more than 700 pieces of art, music, and video from top artists of the era, such as Rick Griffin, Alton Kelley, and Stanley Mouse. The Grateful Dead provided five live songs, and there are a pair of tunes from the Jefferson Airplane. The video clips covering such events as the Human Be-In in January 1967 add immediacy to the experience. The simple, colorful interface uses Leary's

quote as the program's entry points. Turn On is a linear documentary of the era and its issues. Tune In lets you chart your own path by clicking on descriptions, names, or searched keywords. And Drop Out is a game that simulates the street life of the Haight; you must search for food and shelter, find hipness and love, and eventually achieve enlightenment—a reward that varies depending on the places you've visited in the title. After all, everyone's path to enlightenment is different, right?! So plug in, turn on, boot up. (Compton's NewMedia; 619-929-2500; \$49.95)

—Donald St. John

Format: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★



Sixties artist Alton Kelley created new collages, including this one with poet and cultural watchdog Allen Ginsberg.



Spotlight

GOLD-PLATED MEMORIES

Living Legend

Whether or not the boys of summer play ball this year, it's unlikely anyone will live up to the standards set in the 1940s and '50s by "the Kid," Ted Williams. But while Williams may have been "the greatest slugger that ever lived," **Ted Williams The Legend's Own Story** is not quite Cooperstown material.

Make no mistake, there's lots of great stuff packed onto this pair of discs, including both of Thumpin' Theodore's books: *The Science of Hitting* (complete with instructional videos) and the autobiographical *My Turn at Bat*. You also get rare wire-service photos, period newspaper clippings, home movies, radio snippets, and an exclusive video interview conducted last year. Virtual baseball cards detail The Splendid Splinter's lifetime stats, while a slightly amateurish multimedia show lays out highlights of his landmark 1941 sea-



Vintage photos will thrill fans of The Splendid Splinter.

son. Taken together, it's all more than enough to allow Williams fans to relive their memories of the last ballplayer to ever hit .400 in the major leagues.

Unfortunately, the appeal is limited for younger fans who don't remember Williams' incredible career. The interface—while attractive—is slow, confusing, and riddled with typos. The title's multimedia elements often seem unrelated to the text, and switching from one disc to another is yet another hassle. Most annoying, the video and audio tracks are poorly synced. (Kao Infosystems and Global Electronic Publishing; 603-882-9933; \$59.99)

—Fredric Paul

Format: Win CD/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★

March 5, 1994

Sarasota, Florida

Here is a pitcher's eye view of the big game being lost. This is about what an American League fighter knew when Ted Williams connected with a bat and prepared the ball over his right-hand knee. The pitcher spun with a 25 mph curve with 300 rpm. The ball was also from the pitcher's point of view. Ted Williams' bat was in the air. Ted Williams' bat was in the air. Ted Williams' bat was in the air.



Too much text can spoil the CD-ROM.

Star Sounds

Return of the Jedi Audio Clips for Windows is a Force-filled alternative to the beeps and dings your computer usually makes. In addition to whooshing doors and X-Wings whizzing by, you'll get C3PO, Jabba,



Invoke Jabba's ominous laugh every time you exit a program.

Han, Luke, and Leia commenting on your keystrokes. (Sound Source Interactive; 800-877-4778; street price \$14.95)

—Joel Enos

Format: Windows

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Super Moments

Still glowing from the 49ers blowout that ended the NFL's 75th season at Super Bowl XXIX? Wishing it was fall all over again? Well, you can pray for a miracle, or you can check out the **Official Super Bowl Commemorative Edition**, a three-CD-ROM



Take a gander at the Super Bowl's personal rewards.

set from DiscUs Sports. It just might lift your spirits with its video highlights from the first 28 Super Bowls.

Fox's Pat Summerall takes you on a play-by-play trip down memory lane. In the video section, he recounts the key matchups and each game's deciding factors in a slide-show for-

mat. In addition, each game has eight to ten short, somewhat grainy videos of the big plays. You also get to see all the record-setting performances, right down to Roger Staubach's trio of fumbles (since tied twice) in the 1976 contest between the Dallas Cowboys and the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Beyond the game highlights and stats, you can admire the Super Bowl rings and tickets dating back to when the Green Bay Packers crushed the Kansas City Chiefs in Super Bowl I. The rings are bizarrely massive and fascinating. And the ticket stubs are decorated with trophies, players, and interesting sports art, though the pictures are often too small to convey much detail. (DiscUs Sports; 415-306-1000; \$59.95)

—Bill Meyer

Format: Win CD/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★

IT'S LIKE GOING BACK TO THE MESOZOIC ERA.

ONLY THIS TIME YOU GET TO WALK UPRIGHT.

It may be Eden, but a garden it's not. It's a primeval land filled with rain forests, marshy plains and flesh-eating neighbors named "Rex." Not to mention a slew of other dinosaurs, from the peaceful, grass-eating Brontosaurus to the brutal Velociraptor. In *Lost Eden*, you play Adam--not the first man on Earth, but



- Interact with Rex. He won't let you back.
- Rush, survive! It's glorious! Live notice and texture-mapped sequences.
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- 60 minutes of original ambient CD-quality soundtrack and digitized speech.
- Made by the same people who created DUNE™.

Lost Eden. The only adventure strategy game that brings you back to Eden.



possibly the last. That is, if you can't unite the creatures of four continents against a tyrannical Tyrannosaurus Rex. The task is simple: Save mankind. If you're successful, you're a hero. If you fail, you're a fossil.



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Spotlight

THE DIGITAL MAGAZINE RACK

Dynamic Digizines

Nobody knows exactly what a CD-ROM magazine ought to be, but that hasn't stopped more and more ambitious publishers from trying to find the magic combination.

If CD-ROM owners are predominantly males age 25-44, then E-Media's quarterly **Go Digital Interactive Magazine** seems right on target. From the people who brought you the X-rated Dream Machine and the PG-rated Virtual Vegas, Go Digital seems to be trying to be the *Playboy* of the 21st century with its selection of R-rated nude pictorials. Add to that a mix of charmingly amateur video interviews—from a largely incoherent Timothy Leary to the game developers at LucasArts—music reviews, and audio clips.

For features, Go Digital serves up pieces on rave culture and underground comic hero/movie star Tank Girl. You also get a healthy dollop of advertising for mountain bikes, ergonomic chairs, and (surprise!) other E-Media

products. There's even an online component: a World Wide Web page at <http://www.godigital.com>

with updates and a chance to talk back to the editors. A 3DO version of Go Digital is in the works. (E-Media; 800-572-3766; \$19.95/issue, \$39.95/annual quarterly subscription)

If Go Digital effectively uses multimedia to deliver froth, then **Click Interactive** is guilty of the opposite: wasting provocative material in a poor interface. You'll hear John Irving read from his new novel, listen to Noam Chomsky declaim about the evils of media, and have a chance to click through a collection of vampire memorabilia. You also get to read book reviews, meet British rockers Lush, follow a two-year bike trip from Paris to Montreal, and hear the *Slum Dog* comic strip read to you.

Unfortunately, the boring, awkward,

hard-to-read interface makes finding and following the material a real chore. Click Interactive comes across as nothing more than a highbrow version of shovelware. Premiere is working a Win/Mac hybrid version of the magazine. (Premiere Interactive Media; 514-745-5030; \$80/annual quarterly subscription)

—Fredric Paul

Go Digital
Format: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★

Click Interactive
Format: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★



People on Parade

If you're a hopeless media addict, **People: 20 Amazing Years of Pop Culture** is for you. The disc takes you on a tour

of the magazine's covers—and the stories behind them—beginning with the Mia Farrow cover that adorned the first issue, to her reappearance on the 20th anniversary issue in March of last year.

The Star Map links unlikely stars whose paths have crossed. Did you know that Heather Locklear (*Melrose Place*'s tycoon-fatale Amanda) and Scott Baio (*Happy Days*' Chachi) were an item back in the early '80s? There's a whole section devoted to the infamous alleged Princess Di "Squidgy" tape. And the title's search tool lets you



Hear excerpts from Di's purported steamy "Squidgy" tape.



Search for hot *People* trivia.

find particular covers—all redheads with illegitimate children, say. But the best part of the title is the Face-to-Face morphing medleys. Watch Michael Jackson transform from the young, bright-eyed superstar of his "Billie Jean" days to the leather-clad, stringy-haired, ethnically ambiguous recluse of today.

Other morphs showcase Blonde Bombshells from Marilyn to Morgan Fairchild, and the Sexiest Men Alive sequence includes Sean Connery, Harry Hamlin, and (gulp!) Jay Leno.

Unless you already own all 1,038 issues of *People*, you're bound to find lots of entertaining—if trashy—tidbits here. (Voyager; 800-446-2001, \$29.95)

—Joel Eno

Format: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

COREFLOW[™] FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



"Mix and match" the face, body and clothing symbols to create fun characters. CoreFLOW was so easy to use, our son even made our family tree!



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Spotlight

UNTAMED ENTERTAINMENT



Screen Save The Wildlife

You think your life is wild? For a glimpse of real wildlife, check out Amusing Technology's **Africa** screen saver for Windows. Photography mixes with animation to create 16 captivating vistas of African landscapes and the animals that live there, complete with a soundtrack. Clever technology lets the images fill screens up to 1024-by-768 pixels, with no loss of detail. In fact,

Flamingos lounge at Caldera Lake under the beautiful African sky.

Amusing has already licensed the screen saver engine to other companies.

While Africa's scenes are gorgeous, the animal animations can get repetitive. A shareware version with only two screens is also available. (Amusing Technology/Socha Computing; 800-717-6242; \$29.95)

—Fredric Paul

Format: Windows

Rating: ★ ★ ★

A-One, And-a-Two...



Bill Broughton introduces you to the sections of the orchestra in the whimsical **Closet Conductor**.

Roll over, Beethoven, and tell Tchaikovsky the news: **Closet Conductor** from Intersound is a fun, whimsical guide to conducting the classics (if only in the privacy of your own home). This Windows CD-ROM is a hoot.

Host Bill Broughton, a Hollywood composer/conductor, keeps the levels consistently high on the bad-joke-o-meter (Q: What's the difference between violins and cellos? A: Cellos burn longer.) But the title more than compensates for the silliness by addressing the basics to understanding

classical music, such as counting beats and identifying instruments, as well as describing simple conducting techniques.

Unfortunately, the glossary of terms is next to useless, due to flagrant punning, but Intersound balances the act by providing effective guides to the music selections and profiles of such famous conductors as Arturo Toscanini and Arthur Fiedler.

Closet Conductor even includes two audio CDs of classical works, plus your own official 10-inch conductor's baton. (Intersound; 800-945-3059; street price \$29.98)

—Donald St. John

Format: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

A Taste of History

Covering the whole of American history—or even a small chunk of it—is an ambitious goal for any CD-ROM. But Ibis Communications' **American Journey 1896–1945** gives it a valiant shot. The title attempts to portray the emergence of “the American century,” using a collection of snapshots, video, and audio clips of the pivotal events of those 50 years. Unfortunately, it falls short in integrating these elements.



Watch the Hindenburg zeppelin go up in flames.

Video clips range from scenes from the seminal 1903 film *The Great Train Robbery* to Japanese footage of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The program's extensive audio collection features a 1902 William Jennings Bryan speech and radio coverage of the 1937 explosion of the *Hindenburg* zeppelin. Photo essays include classic depictions of the Depression.

Overall, though, **American Journey** is hit-or-miss. You can click on sun icons for fascinating factoids, but you have to struggle through audio clips senselessly divided into separate sections. Calling up text brings multimedia to a screeching halt, and it all runs r-e-a-l-l-y slow on a 486.

Elements of **American Journey** are certainly worthwhile, but don't expect a seamless multimedia look at American history from this title. (Ibis Communications; 806-938-1101; street price \$59.95)

—Donald St. John

Elements of **American Journey** are certainly worthwhile, but don't expect a seamless multimedia look at American history from this title. (Ibis Communications; 806-938-1101; street price \$59.95)

Format: Win CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★

Say No To Yes

Yes: **Active** displays a lazy attitude from a once-potent band. Despite seven cuts from the band's 1994 *Talk* album, a few song demos, and a couple of live videos, interviews, and musician profiles, there's too much missing. Half the discography is gone, and the disc lacks a search utility and uses a dead-dull interface.

For a group that made its name with a rich mix of rock and technology, Yes: **Active** is a real disappointment. (Compton's NewMedia; 619-929-2500; \$29.95)

—Donald St. John



Format: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★

A SOUND INVESTMENT

Lend Me Your Ears

It ain't easy discovering new music these days. Radio playlists are agonizingly limited, and unless you're near a music megastore, it's tough digging up new sounds at the local Wal-Mart.

Not to worry. With the **MusicNet** CD-ROM, a smorgasbord of new music is just a few finger-taps away. Discs are mailed to subscribers each quarter and feature some 250 albums covering pop rock, country, rap, urban, jazz, R&B, folk and even comedy. The selection is surprisingly expensive, ranging from the scorching fretwork of Buddy Guy to the rum-and-Coke wooze of Hawaiian guitar.

A wonderfully simple interface lets you quickly explore albums, preview 30-second



Discover some sweet sounds on the quarterly MusicNet CD-ROM.

audio clips, and view videos. You can also check out cover art, peruse a track listing, or wander through a discography. One minor quibble: It really needs a convenient volume knob.

Of course, there's also the blatant mercantile end of things. While browsing, you can order albums online, via telephone, or by fax. CD prices are reasonable—\$11.98 to \$15.98 with a flat \$3.95 overnight ship-

ping fee for any number of discs. And just in case the CD-ROM's selection doesn't tickle your fancy, MusicNet is also hooked up to a phone service on which you can preview audio clips from an additional 3,000 titles. (MusicNet; 800-375-6874; \$8 per quarterly issue) —James Daly

Format: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Haute Cuisine

Imagine a plush room lit softly by candlelight. Soothing classical music is playing, and the garcon sets plates of exquisite food before you...all as tantalizing to the eye as to the palate.

Wish you could cook and present a meal like this at home?

The **Four Seasons of Gourmet French Cuisine** can teach you how. This elegantly packaged Windows CD-ROM recipe title is

one in a growing series from Arome Interactive (published by Cambrix Publishing). Recipes are presented in full hypertext, so terms relating to special ingredients or procedures are highlighted; clicking on them brings up an explanation.

The title draws from the expertise of many chefs and the French cooking magazine *Thuries*. The interface will inspire even a novice to attempt dishes like Brittany Potée (a hearty stew). There's detailed information on ingredients, preparation time, serving suggestions, and special notes about the dish.



Four Seasons of French cooking made easy.

Browse through a slide show, research ingredients, or select dishes built around one or more ingredients. There's even a seasonal guide to designing meals. The recipes' step-by-step instructions are very easy to follow; they're even accompanied by video clips, so that you'll know you're doing it right.

One shortcoming is that dark ingredients, such as chocolate or burgundy, don't show up very well on screen. As a result, some of the dishes appear rather flat in their photos.

Arome also offers The Art of Making Great Pastries, and you can prepare your taste buds for upcoming titles on Japanese, Italian, Mediterranean, Chinese, vegetarian, and low-cholesterol cooking. Add candles and music to any of these titles, and you're guaranteed a memorable evening. (Arome/Cambrix Publishing; 800-992-8781; \$59.95)

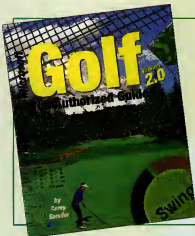
—Joy J. Ma

Format: Win CD/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Electronic entertainment

Shopper



Microsoft Golf Version 2.0: The Authorized Guide

By Corey Sandler

The authorized guide is here for the world's most popular golf simulation game! You'll get in-depth information on each course provided by golf experts, plus an illustrated tour of the controls. Also includes hole-by-hole strategies and travel tips for Firestone, Banff Springs, Torrey Pines, and Mauna Kea.

\$18.95

BK-316

Platform: Windows 3.X or higher

Lode Runner Official Players Guide

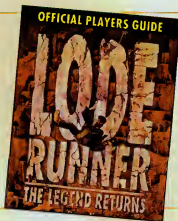
By Bernie Lee

Looking for helpful tips on Lode Runner? This guide shows you how to build your own mazes with the Game Generator, and how to use the Level Builder to create your own game. Plus, discover expert secrets to the mazes of all 150 action-packed game levels and get in-depth coverage of the game's new features!

\$18.95

BK -314

Platform: IBM-PC, Macintosh



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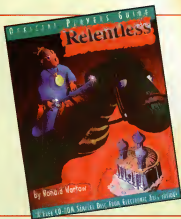
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Relentless: Twinsen's Adventure Official Players Guide

By Ronald Wartow

Packed with tips and hints, this is the only authorized guide to Electronic Arts' hot new action-adventure game. You'll take complete control of the game after reading about all the strategies, blueprints and shortcuts. Plus, a free CD-ROM sampler of several hot games from Electronic Arts!

\$19.95

BK-330

Platform: IBM-PC CD-ROM

Alien Legacy Official Players Guide

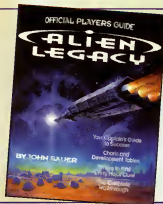
By John Sauer

Get everything you need to be a winner at this exciting new game from Sierra! This guide features all the clues on solving the mystery of the missing Tantulus seedship. PLUS, learn how to explore planets and battle against alien Emplants!

\$18.95

BK-308

Platform: IBM-PC



King's Quest VII Authorized Players Guide

By Peter Spear and Jeremy Spear

With this hot new players guide, your chances for success just got better for this fast-paced title from Sierra! Packed with tips, hints, strategies, detailed maps and full character descriptions, this guide supplies you with everything you need to know to become an expert at King's Quest.

\$18.95

BK-326

Platform: IBM-PC CD-ROM

Aces of the Deep Official Players Guide

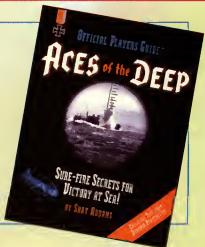
By Shay Addams

This guide gives players the inside track on developing your own strategic plan to control the Atlantic, plus valuable tips on how to survive against bombers, warships, and torpedoes. You'll also learn about the real missions which took place in the North Atlantic during World War II. A sure hit for those seeking expert tactics for fighting each type of enemy warship!

\$18.95

BK-312

Platform: IBM PC CD-ROM



edutainment

GO BONKERS

Funny Farm

A farm can be a fascinating place, especially when it's overflowing with off-the-wall fun. At **Alpha-bonk Farm**, for example, bees hum, garden greens grow, and pigs have wings. Well, almost.

Visitors ages 4 and up will get to know Farmer Alphred A. Bonk, Velma the silky-voiced sow, Clyde the parrot, and Bungi the frog. Alphabonk Farm—with the help of its hosts—comes alive with games, rhymes, and alliteration. Clyde hosts a matching game, while Bungi's Poke 'n' Prod game lets kids interact with objects conjured up by the frog. Clyde and Bungi also alternate reciting wacky rhymes, which children can also read in the book included with the package.

Pee-wee farmers get around Alphabonk Farm by clicking on the letter of the alphabet they're curious about, or with the help of a little truck at the top right corner of the screen that scrolls through a slide show of the farm's outrageous activities. If something catch-

Clyde can help kids mix-and-match farm objects.

Kids can create a custom slide show of their favorite farm spots.



es their interest, kids can click on the screen to stop and explore. Children are also able to create customized slide shows of favorite farm spots, but

they may need a little bit of assistance from you to set it up.

The first in Headbone Interactive's GiggieBone Gang Series, **Alpha-bonk Farm** casts an outrageous eye at farm life, spicing the information with a wild sense of humor. It looks great, too, with a pleasant mix of crisp, original photographs and whimsical illustrations. (Headbone Interactive; 800-267-4709, street price \$35)

—Joy J. Ma

Platform: Win/Mac CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Edutainment with Character



Lovers of the movie *Once Upon a Forest* can look forward to Sanctuary Woods' new game.

Have you kids seen the latest adventures of *The Pagemaster*, *The Lion King*, and *The Muppets*? Not likely if they haven't been spending time in front of the PC, since this trio of blockbusters has been reinvented as edutainment.

Much like big kids find their favorite movies turned into high-profile computer games (see *Game News*, page 60), younger computer users now see their favorite TV and movie characters popping up in computer games and learning programs. Following on the sales success of Disney's Animated StoryBook: *The Lion King*, the company will release **Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree** in April. By fall, look for a CD-ROM product featuring **Pocahontas** (in conjunction with an upcoming Disney film).

Similarly, Fox Interactive will release

The Tick video game for Super Nintendo

and Sega Genesis just as the Fox Children's Network premieres an animated series featuring the big blue superhero. Fox also plans to bring *The Tick* to PC CD-ROM this year, along with **Eek the Cat**, **Bobby's World**, and other properties from the Children's Network. Meanwhile, the characters from Turner Broadcasting's Cartoon Network have been cast in **The Cartoon Network's Toon Jam**, a program that lets kids create music videos starring such Hanna-Barbera favorites as *The Jetsons* and *Yogi Bear*.

Software companies don't have to be offshoots of huge media conglomerates to bank on well-known characters. Sanctuary Woods, for example, has licensed Twentieth Century Fox's **Once Upon a Forest** for a children's adventure that stars furlings Abigail, Russel, and Edgar. Likewise, Sound Source Interactive has licensed DC Comics' **Batman and Robin** (stars of an animated TV show) for a three-part Interactive MovieBook series. **The Adventures of Batman & Robin, Volume 1** should be out in April.

—Christine Grech



Sound Source Interactive's **Batman & Robin MovieBook** brings the Dynamic Duo to the PC.



Can Leo the lion bounce the ball into the net?

Come One, Come All

Kids love the circus, and **Circus!** is their electronic ticket. Voyager's interactive cartoon big top presents some of the more unusual animals and clowns they're ever likely to encounter.

There's plenty to do even before the show begins, from checking out the clown's trailer—and making up their own clown—to playing a marimba and banging drums in the music tent. Kids can even meander along the river and discover the secret mouse-hole entrance to the circus tent.

Once inside, the place is hopping: Help Leo and Theo the lions shoot basketball hoops by jumping on a see-saw, watch as the human cannonball Dyna-

mite gets shot just a little too hard by Max the clown, and check out the goofy dance steps of Dusty and Snoozy, the baby elephants.

The title is aimed at ages 3 and up—way up. Some of the happenings (especially in the clown trailer) seem too surreal for anyone but parents. Most of the program's material, however, has solid educational backing: the basketball game, for example, requires an understanding of the relationship between the lions' height and the size of the balls. *Circus!* is an unusual and fun title any child will enjoy. (Voyager; 800-446-2001; \$39.95)

—Donald St. John

Platform: Win/Mac CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★



P.B. Bear prepares for the big day.

Party Time

New readers are invited to **P.B. Bear's Birthday Party**, due from D.K. Multimedia in April. This Windows CD-ROM tells the story of a cute and cuddly bear who must prepare for the upcoming festivities. The program's unique photo-realistic style mixes the story's text with small pictures of key words, and is accompanied by a photo collage of the scene. The program also includes related learning games and activities. (DK Multimedia; 800-225-3362; \$29.95) —Christine Grech

Platform: Win CD
Ship Date: April

Join the Midnight Society

Haunted houses are a dime a dozen, but a haunted theater is something else entirely. In Viacom New Media's **Are You Afraid of the Dark?: The Tale of Orpheo's Curse**, kids play Terry, who—along with her brother Alex—is trapped in the abandoned hull of Orpheo's theater.

That's where they'll discover such surprises as headless ghouls, shadowy ghosts, and mummies that jump out at every turn. Orpheo's ghost threatens to use them as subjects for his teleportation trick at a midnight performance. Players must collect five enchanted items to dis-



Be careful—not everyone in *Are You Afraid of the Dark?* is helpful.

pel the curse, rescue Alex, and escape before midnight.

The Gothic adventure game for ages 8 and up is based on the hit Nickelodeon TV series *Are You Afraid of the Dark?*, in which members of The Midnight Society entertain each other with scary stories. Players also try to gain

entrance to the society by solving the game's mystery.

The game's graphics combine beautifully rendered environments with still photographs, creating a haunting and disorienting film noir perspective. As they explore the theater, sleuths uncover many mysterious objects to examine and use. The game presents plenty of clues, but kids should keep track of where they're at—especially when they discover secret doors and passages.

Orpheo's Curse provides seemingly limitless possibilities, and it's sure to keep the whole family occupied past the witching hour. (Viacom New Media; 800-469-2539, street price \$60) —Joy J. Ma

Platform: DOS CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

edutainment

MAZES AND MONSTERS

Doom Jr.

If refusing to buy *Doom II* for your child set off a war in your household, call a truce with **I.M. Meen** from Simon & Schuster Interactive. This 3-D action adventure leaves out the blood and guts, but still offers kids 9 and older the *Doom*-style first-person graphics and malicious monsters they want. Oh, and it also provides solid punctuation and spelling exercises.

The player's task is to rescue stolen scrolls and kidnapped children inside Ignatious Mortimor Meen's (I.M. Meen) labyrinth. To free each child, players must correct the punctuation and spelling of a scroll. The game's 36 levels and three difficulty settings keep things challenging.



Punch him out, then correct his grammar.

Pick a winner with I.M. Meen.

Don't expect the game to be totally innocent, though. I.M. Meen, the game's title character, is cartoon-like, but he isn't nice. He calls the player names, and the less he or she can punch them into oblivion first.

Compelling graphics and game play will interest kids who'd rather shoot Reader Rabbit than learn from him, and the punctuation/spelling drills justify the purchase. Good, and good for you. (Simon & Schuster Interactive; 800-983-5333; \$49.95)—*Bill Meyer*

Platform: DOS CD

Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

Look and Learn

Lots of kids are afraid of the dark, but GTE Interactive's new **Night Light** just may alleviate their fears. This game for ages 4 to 9 lets players explore a darkened house where they learn that things aren't as scary as they seem.



Night Light may help kids overcome their fear of the dark.

Guided by Pixel, a feline that's no 'fraidy-cat, and Pandora, a pup that is, players respond to verbal clues to locate the correct item in a complex scene. *Night Light*'s search screens represent eight rooms in the house, but unlike *GTE's Lost and Found* series, here the players look for objects that appear to be menacing at first, but turn out to be harmless. For example, what seems to be an erupting volcano turns out to be a shadow on the wall, and an apparent dragon becomes a bathroom faucet when kids shine the game's flashlight on it.

Another upcoming GTE discovery game, **Professor Wise X-Ray Eyes**, will let players explore an Egyptian pyramid, Noah's Ark, and eight other richly illustrated scenes. (GTE Interactive; 800-483-8632; \$34.99 each) —*Christine Grech*

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD

Ship Date: Late Spring

Latest Living Book

If you've got computers and kids, you're no doubt familiar with *Living Books*, the standard-setting line of interactive storybooks from the company of the same name. And if your kids are readers, you're probably just as familiar with the *Berenstain Bears*, the lovable bear family that's entertained kids in more than 100 children's books written by Stan and Jan Berenstain. Now the two kid-approved classics come together in **The Berenstain Bears Got in a Fight**, due from *Living Books* in April.

The tale of how Brother Bear and Sister Bear get into a squabble and resolve their differences features the tried-and-true *Living Books* formula of high-quality animation, compelling characters, and lively songs. But this title will offer some new touches, too: a Meet the Authors section and an activity guide for parents and kids that suggest fun things to do away from the computer. (*Living Books*; 800-521-6263; street price \$40)

—*Christine Grech*



The *Berenstain Bears* write the *Living Book* on sibling rivalry.

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD

Ship Date: April

486, Pentium, PowerMac...

No matter how fast your PC is, it can't outrun a power problem (Get Uninterruptible...starting at \$119)

Just don't have the time for power problems on your PC? Don't worry. They'll always make the time for you. It's not if a power problem will occur, but when. Due to household appliances, poor wiring, bad weather or even other office equipment, power problems are as inevitable as death and taxes.

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Safe AC

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his computer, standard surge suppressors are literally powerless to protect you. And a study in a recent PCWeek showed that the largest single cause of data loss is bad power, accounting for almost as much data loss as all other causes combined.

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Valentin Gonzalez, Pffor

"Our server was running a project when it lost power... missed up all the data files. It took four days to recover. But we don't worry anymore since we got APC."
Tony Chen, DeAnza Systems

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Kurt Iyer, Software Galleria

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C. Jeffrey, C. Jeffrey Eng.

"APC has virtually eliminated downtime in our corporate network..."
Kurt Roemer, Searle Corp.

"Power went out while processing payroll! If not for APC we would have had a walkout!"
Sue Higgins, OSI Inc



Home office user Don Trux knows first-hand about APC reliability. "It ought to be against the law to buy a computer without an APC Back-UPS 150. I recently had a direct lightning hit right outside the house...my computer never blinked."

"APC lets me sleep better at night. How much would you pay to get back that one file you worked all day to complete for the boss who gets on the plane at 8:00 a.m.? You should assume that you'll buy a UPS, not that it's some luxury item."
R. Morella, Westinghouse

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QUIZ SHOW

Take A GeoSafari

The GeoSafari learning system has delighted kids, parents, and teachers for years as a stand-alone electronic learning aid. Now, Educational Insights Interactive is bringing the popular quiz game to the PC. **GeoSafari Multimedia** features fun questions on geography, history, and science for ages 8 to adult. It will be available as a separate CD-ROM product and bundled in a floppy-disk version with Microsoft's new Bob interface software.

The slick CD-ROM version includes 45 quizzes in a variety of categories that feature animations and videos. One to four players can play GeoSafari, and individual difficulty levels can be adjusted to let kids and adults play together. Folk singer Richie Havens narrates the title, and even calls players by name (the program knows some 1,800 different names).

The floppy-disk based GeoSafari For Bob includes just 18 geography quizzes, although science and animal quiz add-ons are available. Unfortunately, the Bob version lacks the narration



and many of the animations featured on the CD-ROM. (Educational Insights Interactive; 310-884-1931; \$49.95; additional GeoSafari modules for Bob are \$19.99 each)

Compete fairly against your kids with GeoSafari Multimedia's varying difficulty levels.

—Fredric Paul

Platform: Win CD, Mac CD, Microsoft Bob
Ship Date: CD-ROM, spring; Bob, March

Random Knowledge

Multimedia encyclopedias such as Microsoft Encarta and Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia are great information resources for the whole family, but not necessarily fun places for younger kids. Knowledge Adventure's **The Random House Kid's Encyclopedia**, on the other hand, is designed for ages 7 to 12. Its fun, colorful interface—laid out like a town—makes it seem more like a game than a reference work.

Kids move around the 3-D environment with a mouse, going from places like the Factory, the reference portion of the program; to the Movie Theater, which illustrates words and concepts; to the Maze,



The Random House Kid's Encyclopedia doesn't look like a stuffy reference work.

five fun learning games like Zoomscape

Scavenger Hunt, Letter Rip, Brain Blazer, Puzzle Time, and Match O Rama. No matter where they wander, they're sure to meet up with VidKids, video guides who help out interesting sights. If kids need help getting started, audio explanations done in a TV-announcer style make it fun to ask for help.

The Random House Kid's Encyclopedia

In the Factory, visitors browse through interesting articles or take a Tour with the VidKids.

where they can play

globe to travel the world, or go on a tour with the VidKids. Many of the entries are narrated, and every one is illustrated with photos and videos.

Kids who are even younger, ages 3 to 6, will enjoy Knowledge Adventure's First Encyclopedia, which also includes VidKid guides. (Knowledge Adventure; 800-542-4240; street price \$40 each)

—Christine Grech

Platform: Win CD
Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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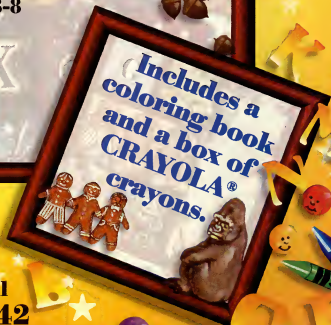
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Game On

Corey Sandler

Talking Baseball

Ray Bradbury told us this would happen more than 40 years ago. Guy Montag's wife in *Fahrenheit 451* lived in a world where game show hosts addressed her by name and inquired about her health before turning the next letter. And *The Illustrated Man* described virtual reality in "The Veldt," a Holodeck before there were holograms or *Enterprises* or even personal computers.

Fast-forward to today, where computers have already brought us a long way toward fulfillment of part of that science-fiction dream; online providers now offer services that create your own electronic newspaper, filled with articles on subjects that fit your interests.

But as far as seamless and natural audio narration of complex events, today's state-of-the-art seemed more Max Headroom than Peter Jennings. That is, until I met the digital Ernie Harwell.

Detroit Tigers announcer Ernie Harwell spent three months recording 30,000 sound bites.

If all of the bits and bytes fall into place, APBA Baseball for Windows Version 3.0 with Ernie Harwell's Broadcast Blast should be delivering customized play-by-play on PCs across America about the time you read this. (Miller Associates; 800-654-5472; Win CD, not yet priced)

Followers of computerized baseball games already know that APBA Baseball for Windows provides a marvelous statistical simulation of baseball, using stats for current players, Hall of Famers, and 9,000 others who made it to The Show.

But a baseball game is also a story, and great broadcasters such as Mel Allen, the late Red Barber, Vin Scully, and Ernie Harwell bring that story to life. These men


natural-language scripting tool can manage a virtually unlimited database of digitally recorded sound.

"Much of the intelligence of the game lies in the scripting tool," explains Kenneth Miller, president of Miller Associates. The key was to think of baseball as a language, Miller says: "We had to figure out what announcers say and when they say it. When do they talk about skills, when do they talk about what the pitcher is doing, when do they talk about the batter, and when do they talk about other things? Once you formalize all that thinking, the scripting language captures it using fuzzy logic."

With RichSound managing the database of Harwellisms, every action of the game you play is announced with detailed commentary, delivered almost seamlessly. Here's a sample:

"Next up is Dom DiMaggio. Already has a homer in this game...his first. Dom is one for two with a walk, and he scored twice. The swift-footed Pesky is at first. Clem Labine focuses in on the target. The pitch: line drive to third. It's over his head. Robinson's chasing it. He's up with it. The throw comes in to Reese; they're holding Pesky at third and DiMaggio's in standing with a double. The go-ahead run is now on third. It's the second hit for DiMaggio in the game."

You don't have to be a baseball fan to realize how much information the game has to stitch together to create that play-by-play. What makes it really impressive is that you are in charge of the lineup and actions of the players. You can change the names of the teams; you can even add your own name to the lineup.

Miller plans additional titles using the RichSound Authoring System and is ready to license its technology to others. Bradbury may have been on to something; look for ABC News to trundle Peter Jennings into the recording studio any day now. 



are poets combining the precision of numbers, the artistry of the game, and their own signature phrases.

Ernie Harwell, the voice of the Detroit Tigers for 30 years, has contributed much to the language of baseball, including his signature home run call: "It's lnnnnngggg gone!" and his famed description of a batter taking a third strike: "He just sat there like a house on the side of the road." Harwell spent three months working with Miller Associates to record more than 30,000 sound bites, including the elements of the game, colorful commentary, stats, and the first and last names of every player who ever pulled on a Major League jersey.

To create the digital Ernie Harwell, the new APBA Baseball for Windows incorporates a brand-new technology called the RichSound Authoring System. This

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Multimaniac

Paul Bonner

Make My Game

The Multimaniac has embarked on a great undertaking: the spiritual journey from the mundane realm of one who plays games to the exalted inner circle of one who creates them.

How did the Multimaniac accomplish this awesome transformation? And how can you learn to write your own name in the heavenly ledger of game developers? It's easy. You can skip all that messy coding and jump headlong into the game-writing process with *Klik & Play*. (Maxis; 800-336-2947; Windows/Win CD; \$54.95; for more information, see "Klik & Play," December 1994, page 122.)

Maxis calls *Klik & Play* the "revolutionary instant game creator," but that's a lie—a small, very pale one. *Klik & Play* does let you create complex, challenging games quite easily—and even lets you compile them into stand-alone programs that can be distributed online or on floppy disks. But the process isn't instant: It takes time

I used Klik & Play to make Ciudad San Cindy a game of beauty and honor, but also one of danger.

and planning and a fair amount of work.

Fortunately, the work is fun. It certainly inspired me, and gave me the confidence to undertake a monumental project—bringing the terrible plight of Supermodels to the attention of America's most concerned, caring, and thoughtful audience: computer game

players. The beautiful and benighted community of Supermodels toil under the harshest lights, braving everything from split ends to broken nails in their high-checkboned quest to make the world a more stylish place.

Using *Klik & Play*, I was able to bring to life my homage to these overworked, underappreciated doyennes, in a dazzling and original arcade game that I call *Ciudad San Cindy* in honor of the saintlike Ms. Crawford.



Ciudad San Cindy in action: Our rag-doll heroine is lost in a sea of hostile flash cameras and the evil "Ordinary Guy."

Ciudad San Cindy is a place of beauty and honor, but also one of danger. The player, taking the part of a Supermodel and represented in the game by a rag doll figure from *Klik & Play*'s large palette of pre-designed game characters (you can also design custom ones yourself), has to battle level after level of terrible perils. On the first level, for instance, which takes place over a backdrop of Cindy's own face, you've got to scurry about, gathering jewels, gold, and diamonds and carrying them to Cindy's famous mole, while avoiding an incessant shower of flashing cameras and the extraordinarily evil "Ordinary Guy" figure (also from *K&P*'s palette). On subsequent levels, you've got to climb the twisted ladders of Fashion Avenue, avoid sand storms during a *Sports Illustrated* photo shoot, and finally face the ultimate

horror: dozens of Mickey Rourke crashing your season-ending Milan runway show.

It was amazingly simple to realize my vision for *Ciudad San Cindy* with *Klik & Play*. I imported the background bitmaps from PCX files that I found in the Supermodel section of a local BBS, then grabbed additional figures from *Klik & Play*'s enormous palette of tools to represent the paparazzi cameras, evil guys, and prizes. Then I selected each figure in turn

and clicked my way to screens that let me determine their movements. Finally, I launched the game in *Klik & Play*'s Step Through Editor, which pauses the game whenever a new event occurs—a collision, a figure leaving the screen—to determine what effect that event should have. At that point, I chose the appropriate response—lose a life, gain a life, lose or gain points—and clicked the Continue button.

Once I'd covered all the relevant events this way, I was ready to do a complete run-through of my masterpiece—not bad for a few hours' work. Of course, there's still more work to be done. I want to take advantage of *K&P*'s ability to attach digitized sound effects to all the events in the game, and I may even import a digitized animation file (FLC format) or two from *K&P*'s library. But already, *Ciudad San Cindy* is shaping up to be sweeter than a Supermodel's smile.

Klik & Play also includes hundreds of more prosaic backgrounds and game figures—from castles and race tracks to monsters and one-armed bandits. These let you easily create anything from a Space Invaders knockoff to a classic ladders, auto race, or casino game. The bundled sample programs illustrate all of these and more; there's even a decent foosball game in which the Multimaniac invested a week or so of additional research.

Oops, I gotta go. It's time to go add another horror to level five of *Ciudad San Cindy*: crow's feet!

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everything you need to know to

For once, the hype is justified. Cruising the Internet can be a blast.

Sure, understanding this huge network of computers, services, software, and information isn't a piece of cake. To the casual observer, the whole thing seems like hopeless anarchy.


Not quite. Think of your computer connected to several other computers in your neighborhood. That cluster of computers is connected to others around your city, those, in turn, link to other computers in cities around the country, and so on—creating the series of globally INTER-connected NETworks collectively known as the Internet. The result is an awesome collection of information, ranging from the insanely technical to the whimsically simple, from the profoundly arcane to the painfully obvious, from the deadly serious to the seriously funny.

The best thing about the Internet is that with an estimated 30–40 million users and hundreds of sites located worldwide, the 'Net has something for everyone. Want to know how to create a blowtorch from a strawberry Pop Tart, a toaster, and a strip of cellophane tape? Visit <http://cbi.tamucc.edu/~pmichaud/toast/>. Like to talk to other dedicated groupies about Nine Inch Nails leader Trent Reznor's turn-ons? Check out alt.sex.fetish.trent-reznor. Desperate to conjugate the verb "to be" in Klingon? Drop into alt.startrek.klingon.

Don't despair. These strange strings of almost-English gibberish are simply the way you write addresses for different stops along what passes for the Information Superhighway. But making pit stops to collect strange information isn't all you can do on the Internet. The 'Net gives you a great way to communicate electronically with people all over the world, play games, access thousands of data and program files, and search vast databases full of helpful and interesting information. You could play online computer games with a cyberpunk in France, download a shareware game file from a computer in New York, indulge in a live chat with a fellow sportsman in Australia, or even view photographs from the Chernobyl disaster stored on a mainframe in the Ukraine.

Until recently, though, those long strings of indecipherable text and other technical road-





blocks meant that the Internet was the exclusive domain of seasoned computer users undaunted by complex UNIX commands and unintimidated by the Internet's chaotic nature. That's starting to change—often to the dismay of cyberspace veterans. More and more people are recognizing the commercial, social, and entertainment potential of this enormous global network; millions of “newbies” (newcomers) are jumping on board via commercial online services such as Prodigy, America Online, and CompuServe. With the influx, parts of the Internet are becoming more conventional, better organized, and easier to navigate—not to mention more crowded.

Of course, hopping onto the Internet is still a bit more complicated than pointing your car onto the freeway. There are a number of ways to get started. If you don't have a high-speed direct connection through your job or school—by far the best way to go—you'll need a modem to connect your PC or Mac to the Internet over a standard telephone line. A 14.4 kilobits-per-second (Kbps) modem costs about \$100 (for more on low-cost modems, see “The Best Baud for the Buck” on page 86) and is fast enough to get you started, but the new breed of 28.8 Kbps models (about \$250 each) works much better for moving files and accessing unwieldy graphics files.

Unfortunately, the hardware is the easy part; the software and services you need for logging on are a bit more complicated. You have a range of options:

- Local bulletin board systems (BBS);
- Online services like America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, Delphi, and others;
- Shell, SLIP (serial line Internet protocol), and PPP (point-to-point protocol) accounts from dedicated Internet service providers.

Each of these options provides different levels of access to the 'Net, and which one is right for you depends on what you want to do. To help you figure it out, we'll step through all the possibilities you have for finding good stuff on the Internet, from the most basic (and easiest to use) to the most challenging and rewarding. (For a breakdown of what products and services offer which kinds of Internet access, see our chart on page 45.)

experience Internet excitement

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FTP

Internet Glossary

Address

Internet e-mail addresses are composed of initials or a name followed by the "at" sign, a registered abbreviation for your organization, and an appropriate extension such as .com, .edu, or .gov.

Anonymous FTP

(See also FTP) The technique used to access the files on multiple FTP sites at one time. To log on, you use the word "anonymous" as your user ID and your e-mail address as your password.

Archie

An FTP search tool used to find files and directories that match specific keywords. Related search engines are named Veronica and Jughead.

BBS

Bulletin Board System. A BBS is a storehouse of information and messages, where people can exchange files and communicate with each other. Often small and dedicated to special interests, BBSs were the forerunners of online information services like CompuServe and Prodigy.

Finger

This command lets you find out who's logged into a particular Net address, or find out if a particular user is logged on at all.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions. FAQs are lists of answers to basic questions many people ask when they are new to an area. Look for the answers to your questions in a FAQ before posting messages.

Flame

A flame is a virtual tongue-lashing. Newbies get flamed a lot. The best response is to ignore it, and the best way to avoid getting flamed is to read the FAQs before you post questions. Flaming back can spark a "Flame War." For examples of this incendiary sport, check out the alt.flame.hell-of-flame newsgroup. Be warned: The language can be rather colorful.

Post Haste

The most basic service the Internet provides is electronic mail. Sending e-mail combines the immediacy of a phone call with the text orientation of "snail mail" (care of the folks in the little white Jeeps who occasionally get disgruntled and shoot each other). With e-mail, you can compose a note, label it with the recipient's Internet address, and then send it jumping almost instantaneously into that mailbox—no matter where in the world it's located. Makes FedEx look lazy.

Even better, you can use Internet e-mail for a simple form of electronic publishing. By creating or joining mailing lists, or *listservs*, you can instantly disseminate information and opinions around the world. With mailing lists, you can quickly reach thousands of people with a common interest—the exchange of Grateful Dead tickets, for example. Not surprisingly, people and companies who something to sell also love this Internet feature even more than you do, although they're not always loved back.

Subscribers to commercial online services already have access to Internet e-mail. It's generally just a matter of adding a few extra characters at the end of an address to have a message leave your home service and go winging over the Net. Unfortunately, some services (read: CompuServe) charge members extra for receiving messages from people on other online services or on the Internet. You can also enjoy Internet mail through many local BBSs as well as through more advanced Internet connections like shell and PPP accounts.

Read All About It

But e-mail is only the beginning. The Internet holds some 10,000 Usenet newsgroups. These newsgroups are logs of typed discussions between people interested in a particular subject. You can read these conversations, or "threads," at your leisure and add your own comments for others to read later.

The Internet has newsgroups covering every

topic imaginable. Gamers can drop in to alt.games.doom to follow a discussion of the latest Doom tournament or eavesdrop on the scurlebut surrounding the newest crop of PC adventure games in comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.adventure.

Purple-dinosaur haters can bond with others who share in the belief that Barney is evil incarnate in alt.barney.dinosaur.die.die.die. Just remember: Newsgroups, like other Internet locales, are a volatile bunch.

New groups are born (and others disappear) all the time.

To visit a newsgroup, you can use a stand-alone news reader (which you can pick up as shareware online or find bundled with Internet how-to books). Or you can use the newsgroup option built into many online services and BBSs. Beware, though: Some services censor their lists of newsgroups. America Online and CompuServe, for example, squelch all of the alt.sex groups from the search function, but if you already know the news-



1919: Off-World (A Blade Runner Page)
The net's first true hi-fi music archive
This place ain't got Teal, therefore it blows.
--- Patrick McGeehan, 11/13/94, 10:20:11 PM (Newark, NJ)
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<http://kzoo.stanford.edu/www/hr/off-world.html>

If you're a fan of the movie *Blade Runner*, this Web site's for you.

Usenet Newsgroups

Newsgroup address	What you'll find there
newsgroups.announce	Help for new users
newsgroups.questions	
newsgroups.newusers	
alt.astrology	Hoy, baby, what's your sign?
alt.binaries.*	Binary pictures, digital movies, and sound files aplenty.
alt.beer	Reads great, lots of fluff.
alt.home.repair	No Tim Allen, but lots of good fixes.
alt.sex.*	Whatever blows your dress up. For example...
alt.sex.bondage	Tie me, whip me, make me surf the Net!
alt.sex.fetish.star Trek	Illogical, yet fascinating: Star Trek lust.
alt.sex.fetish.tickling	Laughter is the best foreplay.
alt.sports.baseball.sf.giants	Go Giants!
alt.tasteless.jokes	Better than a lampshade.
rec.games	Chatter about all types of board, role-playing, video, and simulation games. (See alt.games*, too.)
rec.humor.*	A repository for funny stuff.
rec.arts.books.childrens	The inside scoop on reading material for the kids.

* An asterisk indicates a series of options. For example alt.binaries.* includes alt.binaries.respictures, alt.binaries.movies, and alt.binaries.sound.

A Peek at the Web

0

Web Site	Content	Web Address
The Internet Underground Music Archive	Samples of popular music.	http://www.iuima.com
The Internet Movie Database	Everything you ever wanted to know about movies.	http://www.msstate.edu/Movies/welcome.html
Confession Booth	Sin goes digital.	http://enther.learning.cs.cmu.edu/30/prices.html
The Web Louvre	Take a virtual visit to one of the world's great museums.	http://sunsite.unc.edu/louvre/
ChibaMOO	This is an online game in the MOO tradition.	http://chiba.picosol.com/about/
Yahoo-A Guide to the WWW	A great way to find specific things on the Web.	http://akebono.stanford.edu/yahoo/
The Exploratorium	Online experiments from the Exploratorium children's museum in San Francisco.	http://www.exploratorium.edu/
The Lite-Brite Page	A virtual version of the toy many of us played with as kids. Plug 'em in and they light up.	http://www.galci.caltech.edu/~ta/b/b.html
The Web Coffee Pot	A photo of a pot of coffee in England, updated every minute. Stranger than fiction.	http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/coffee/coffee.html

group's exact Internet address you can ask for it by name to gain access. Many BBSs and all advanced Internet accounts also support Usenet.

Breaker, Breaker

If reading yesterday's conversations isn't interactive enough for you, drop in on the IRC (Internet Relay Chat), the 'Net's text version of Citizen's Band (CB) radio. Here, people type in their comments in a sort of text-only party-line free-for-all. Like the chat facilities in CompuServe and America Online, IRC has a variety of channels, each with its own flavor. You can talk about the problems in Bosnia with people who actually live there, or get advice about the best places to stay in the Far East from people in Tokyo, Taiwan, and Singapore.

Since the major online services have their own chat areas, they don't currently offer IRC access (except for Delphi), although America Online plans to add it soon. If you have an Internet shell account, you may already have IRC access. (To find out, type HELP IRC once you're connected to the Internet.) Your other options for getting IRC include using FTP (see below) to download the IRC software or employing Telnet (see below) to connect to a public-access IRC site (sci.dixie.edu/6677, for example).

Online chat is a little different from ordinary conversation, though. Like the original CB radio, participants generally use nicknames, or handles, and employ a unique vocabulary. "Huggers" is a common greeting, for example, and people often express emotions using either abbreviations (including LOL=laughing out loud;

In addition to a dizzying array of business programs, research transcripts, and system enhancement files, there's a lot of fun stuff to be had on the Internet. There are hundreds of shareware games (remember, Doom got its start as shareware on the 'Net), song lyrics, and 'zines (online magazines) covering topics from poetry to politics and everything in between. Best of all, most files are free for the downloading.

To get at these files, you'll need to use FTP (File Transfer Protocol), the standard procedure for moving files around the 'Net. FTP is often used as a verb, as in, "He FTPed the file from a computer in Sweden." FTPing involves linking up with the host computer (the FTP site) that has files you want and copying them to your computer. FTP is also used for uploading items you want to share.

The major online services have recently begun to support FTP, which has always been a staple of dedicated Internet service providers. You can also get FTP software as shareware online or bundled with Internet books.

For access to an even wider variety of files, you can use "anonymous FTP" to grab files listed on some 80 FTP sites—more than 100 gigabytes worth, stored on more than 1,000 different computers. You simply type the word "anonymous" for your user ID and enter your e-mail address as the password. (Most online services automatically set up anonymous FTP for you—just click the FTP icon.) You can then direct the FTP software to a particular folder or ask for a listing of all of the files available, using a variety of search programs. One



<http://www.grady.wga.edu/kirk.html>

Original Trekkers will wanna sing along with Kirk.

ROTFL=rolling on the floor laughing; IMHO=in my humble opinion) and/or silly key-stroke combinations called "emoticons"—such as :- for happy, :- for sad, and ^-) for a teasing wink.

Following Protocol

Of course, the Internet is more than just talk. The 'Net stores untold numbers of files on large and small computers around the world—most of which are just waiting for you to go out and download 'em.

FTP

File Transfer Protocol. The Internet convention for moving files from one computer to another. An FTP site is a host computer that holds a group of files. FTP readers, used to upload and download files, may be stand-alone programs or part of an online service.

Gopher

Gopher is a menu-driven service that uses FTP and Telnet to provide access to huge lists of files on remote computers.

Home Page

A home page is a multimedia table of contents for a World Wide Web site.

HTML

Hyper Text Markup Language. The graphical programming code used to create sites on the World Wide Web.

HTTP

Hyper Text Transfer Protocol. The protocol for accessing the World Wide Web (all WWW addresses begin with <http://>).

IRC

Internet Relay Chat. The Internet version of CB Radio.

MOO

MUD Object Oriented. A type of multi-user game in which you can alter characters and events after they have been created.

Mosaic

The first graphical interface designed for browsing in the World Wide Web. It has been updated and is still available as freeware.

MUD

Multi-user Dungeons. A text-based role-playing environment in the tradition of Dungeons and Dragons. Multiple players Telnet into a single computer and interact with one another to develop elaborate tales and relationships using fantasy characters.

NetScape

NetScape's graphical interface, or browser, for the World Wide Web. Based on Mosaic, NetScape is optimized for use with modems that run at 14.4 Kbps or faster.

Newbie

A term used by Internet veterans to refer (rather unfavorably) to newcomers to the Internet.

Newsgroup

(See also Usenet) A bulletin board facility designed to collect and organize discussions on a particular topic.

PPP

Point-to-Point Protocol. A communication convention used by the Internet to package and send data. Available from dedicated Internet service providers like NETCOM, PPP accounts let you use browsers for a graphical view of the World Wide Web. SLIP is an older, more widely used protocol with many similarities to PPP.

Resource Type

Appearing at the beginning of an Internet address, it specifies the proper connection and protocol.

SLIP

Serial Line Internet Protocol. (See also PPP)

Telnet

A facility that lets you remotely control computers over the Internet. Often used as a verb ("To play in a MUD, you must Telnet to the appropriate host computer").

Thread

A series of posted messages that follow a particular topic.

Usenet

(See also Newsgroups) A collection of bulletin-board-like facilities designed to organize and log user discussions, called threads, on a wide variety of topics.

Veronica

A search utility for finding files on a gopher site that match a user-defined criterion. The gopher version of Archie.

World Wide Web

A portion of the Internet that supports multimedia and hypertext-linked files. The fastest growing portion of the 'Net, the Web is attracting attention from all sorts of new enterprises.

such search program is known as Archie, short for archive. Archie will scan an index of files and directories within a FTP site to find matches to a keyword you enter.

Several versions of Archie are floating around the 'Net. Three places to try: archie.ans.net, archie.rutgers.edu, and archie.unl.edu.

Gopher the Gusto

The 'Net has some version of nearly every game, file, and piece of information you could ever want, but finding it can be a real chore. Gopher, a tool developed at the University of Minnesota (and named after the school mascot), makes it easy to get at a vast number of files. Gopher uses keywords just as FTP does, but you don't have to be as specific about the folders you want to peruse. Gopher lets you scan lists of files harvested from computers all over the world. There's enough "stuff" to satiate even the most serious software junkie. Once you locate the files you want, the gopher's on-screen pointer makes it easy to transfer the files to your machine. The gopher equivalent to Archie is Veronica, which lets you



<http://another.learning.cs.cmu.edu/9priest.html>

The Confession Booth
Web site: the next best thing to being there.

The Digital Drive-In is a hot-buttered compendium of digital movie news and sample files.



<http://www.digital.com/gm/special/drivein/index.html>

Gopher is available on America Online, CompuServe, Prodigy, and Delphi, and most Internet service providers make a version of gopher available. There are both text-based and graphical versions of the software and search tools. DOS users can use anonymous FTP to get PC Gopher for DOS (PCG3.ZIP) from the pub/packages directory of sunsite.unc.edu. Windows users can grab GopherBook for Windows; the file is gophbook.zip from pub/micro/pc-stuff/ms-windows/app at the same site. Mac owners can turn to TurboGopher at sumex-aim.stanford.edu in the info-mac/comm directory.

Untangling the Web

If you surf the 'Net looking for slick graphics and multimedia sizzle, you'll be disappointed most of the time. You can use FTP and gopher to grab multimedia games and programs to play on your PC, but your view of the 'Net will still be pure text—unless you

browse the World Wide Web (WWW).

Here, the 'Net comes alive with graphics, sounds, and even video. Perhaps the hottest part of the Internet these days, the Web was created by scientists at CERN, a particle physics lab in Europe, to make interacting with the Internet easier and more enjoyable. The first Web sites used hypertext to link highlighted words with related material in other files. In 1993, a group of undergraduates at the University of Illinois created a free-

Pipeline is one of the popular graphical interfaces that you can use with a shell or PPP account.

ware program called Mosaic that added audio and video file-linking capabilities to the WWW. It works.

To browse the Web, you'll want something like Netscape, an elegant graphical Web interface adapted from Mosaic. Netscape supports color, graphics, sound, and video and is even easier to use than Mosaic. Prodigy recently added full World Wide Web graphical access to its roster of services, and America Online, CompuServe, Delphi, and other services also plan to add graphical Web browsers soon. (Delphi presently has text-only Web access.) Many Internet service providers have their own viewers for visiting WWW sites. (If you want some ideas on where to go for goodies, see "A Peek at the Web" on page 43.)

The Web is a fantastic place to hang out, but it's not a fast-moving experience if you're connected via a standard telephone line. It can take at least a half-hour to download a complex graphical screen to view on your computer with a

A graphical gopher can provide easy access to thousands of great files.

14.4 Kbps modem. A 28.8 Kbps modem helps, but you'll really enjoy the Web, you'll want a really fast direct connection like the ones provided by technologically benevolent employers and universities. The completion of the real Information Superhighway is expected to bring this kind of high-speed access to anyone who wants it—someday.

Telnet Like It Is

Web sites have a lot to offer, but they still don't provide certain important Internet experiences. To really feel connected, you'll need telnet. Telnet is the process of connecting your computer to another computer on the Internet so that your keyboard then controls the operations of the remote computer. With this kind of hookup, you can effortlessly read and copy files and access programs running on that remote computer.

To get telnet access, BBSs and most commercial online services won't do, although Delphi lets you telnet from its Internet Services Menu. You'll need to work through a dedicated Internet service provider—most of which support telnet. Or you can pick up shareware utilities that support telnet. Find them online or in Internet books.

It's worth it, because you need full telnet access to play many types of games on the 'Net, including the popular MUDs, MOOs, MUSEs, and MUSHes. These text-based fantasy games require a number of players to telnet to a single computer. The game software acts as the traffic cop controlling the various commands issued by the multiple players.

MUDs (multi-user dungeons), MOOs (MUD Object Oriented), MUSEs (Multi-User Shared Experience), and MUSHes (Multi-User Shared Hallucinations) are role-playing mind games in the tradition of Dungeons and Dragons. You create a character and then navigate through the environment by typing simple commands like "go left," "pick up the gem," "wink at damsel," etc. You share the experience with dozens or even hundreds of other players. While they lack the graphical excitement of games like Doom or Rebel Assault, a well-written MUD can easily conjure up complex images in your mind's eye. Try telnetting to AlexMud at 132.203.14.100 4000 or

Commercial Online Services

The following online providers provide Internet services in addition to their own chat, e-mail, and information offerings.

Name	Current Internet Services	Internet Services on the way	Price
CompuServe 800-848-8199	e-mail, FTP, Usenet	WWW browser	\$9.95/mo + extra charge per e-mail message beyond \$9 allowance
America Online 800-827-6364	e-mail, FTP, gopher, Usenet	WWW browser	\$9.95/mo. includes 5 hrs. + \$2.95/hr. after that
Prodigy 800-776-3449	e-mail, FTP, gopher, Usenet, WWW browser	New Prodigy interface	\$9.95/mo. includes 5 hrs. + \$2.95/hr. after that
Delphi 800-695-4005	e-mail, FTP, gopher, WWW, telnet, IRC, Usenet	Graphical interface	\$10/mo. Includes 4 hrs. + \$4/hr. after that or \$19/mo. includes 20 hrs. + \$1.80/hr. after that

Internet Service Providers

Most access providers offer a range of services and fees. Contact the individual companies for more details.

Name	Access Provided	Areas Covered	Price
CERFnet 619-455-3900	Dial-up and dedicated lines, SLIP/PPP	California, 800# access	Local access: \$20/mo. (waived first month) includes 2 hrs for first 3 mos. + \$3/hr. after that. Toll-free access: \$50 initiation fee; \$20/mo. includes 10 weekday hrs and 8 weekend hrs, \$3/hr. after that
NYSERNet 315-453-2912	Dial-up and dedicated lines, WWW	New York state	\$18/mo. + \$2/hr. 8am-6pm Mon-Fri. \$1/hr. all other times
Internet Express 708-983-8064	Dial-up and dedicated lines, SLIP/PPP, UNIX shell, telnet, IRC, Gopher, e-mail	Nationwide	Options start at \$11.95/mo. including 4 hrs. + \$2.75/hr. after that
NETDOM 800-501-8649	Dial-up and dedicated lines, UNIX shell, graphical software for e-mail, FTP, telnet, Usenet	Nationwide	Options start at \$17.50/mo. for dial-up UNIX shell account.
World Wide Access 708-367-1970	Dial-up and dedicated lines, UNIX shell, WWW, SLIP/PPP	Chicago	\$5/mo. for UNIX shell with Usenet and e-mail; \$25/mo. for SLIP/PPP

Software Starter Kits

These Internet software kits work with the services or providers listed above, giving you everything you need to get started.

Name	Software Provided	Platform	Price
Internet In A Box Spry: 800-557-9614	e-mail, FTP, gopher, Mosaic (WWW), telnet, Usenet	PC	\$149
Internet Starter Kit Hayden Books: 800-428-5331	e-mail, FTP, gopher, MacTCP, SLIP, Archie	PC/Mac	\$29.95
Mac Internet Tour Guide Ventana Press: 800-743-5369	e-mail, FTP, gopher, Ventura Mosaic	Mac	\$24.95
Windows Internet Tour Guide Ventana Press: 800-743-5369	e-mail, telnet, FTP, TCP/IP	PC	\$29.95

Elements at Paradox MUD at 192.41.245.90 6996, The Lambda MOO is also a popular place to play at lamda.parc.xerox.com 8888.

'Net Worth

We've only touched upon the fun you can have cruising the Internet. Entertainment means different things to different people. But if you enjoy exchanging ideas, making new friends, downloading shareware games and other cool stuff, the Internet is just about the most entertaining place to be right now.

Hank Duderstadt, an Internet and World Wide Web consultant, has been surfing cyberspace since 1985. He can be reached at ddvsn@dudervision.com.



<http://xerox.stanford.edu/~rst/mtn-bike.html>
From the fun on the Web.





By Christopher Lindquist

Make Music Videos— or

Tired of adventure games that make you hang out with orcs and elves and wizards and other old news? Sick of boring, gloomy soundtracks that repeat themselves every 18 seconds?

Then let Pop Rocket's *Total Distortion* take you on a wild trip to the Distortion Dimensions, where you wield an electric guitar instead of a magical sword, where the music makes you want to buy the soundtrack, and where the undead are rock stars, not target practice.

This is an adventure game like no other. For starters, you've just inherited a hefty chunk of change from your uncle. But rather than invest it in some safe mutual fund like your mother would want, you pick up the latest in interdimensional transit, a Personal Media Tower, and head for the Distortion Dimensions.

Why? To make music videos, dork. The folks on Alternate Earth are a little sick of the local talent, and top video producers are willing to pay big bucks for new tunes and hot images to sell to the video drones back home.

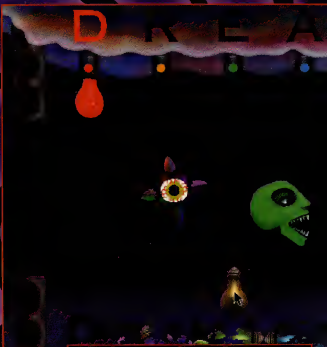
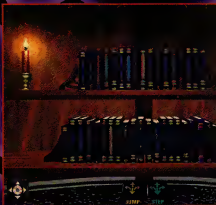
Unfortunately, buying the Tower and transporting yourself to the Dimensions just about sucks your bank account dry, so you've got to make some killer videos to earn enough cash to get home. Of course, just getting back isn't enough. To win, you've got to achieve fame, fortune, or both, and the only way to do that is to venture into the Halls of Distortion to find and film new talent. So grab your interdimensional guitar case, power up your video camera, and head for the Halls. Oh, and don't forget to pack your lunch. (Electronic Arts; 800-245-4525; Win CD/Mac CD; \$59)

GUIDED TOUR



The Personal Media Tower is where it all begins. Create videos, nap, or browse the library from here. Just don't forget to keep an eye on the Tower's fuel supply, or you could be stuck in this dimension forever.

You'll find plenty of reading material on the bookshelf to keep you busy in the off-hours. Some of it is just a fun waste of time, but you may learn something to help you sell your videos.



In Total Distortion, even sleep offers no respite. You must win one of several Dream Games to wake up with extra Mental Energy. This one asks, "How many rock video producers does it take to screw in a light bulb?"

TOTAL DISTORTION GAME STATUS				TURN
CURRENT STATUS				
NAME	[Player Name]			
Physical Energy	[Progress Bar]			
Mental Energy	[Progress Bar]			
Life Force	[Progress Bar]			
CASH	1000	STATUS	[Status Icon]	
POWER	1000	QUAL	[Quality Icon]	
GAME IN PROGRESS				
Score	1000	Time	[Time Icon]	
Difficulty Level	1000	Stage Level	[Stage Level Icon]	

SAVE GAME

LOAD GAME

END GAME

HELP

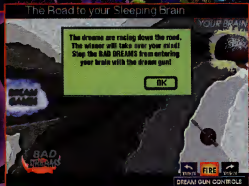
QUIT

RESUME GAME

How're you doing? The Status Screen will tell you. Remember, you'll never make it to fame and fortune if your Physical and Mental Energy and Life Force ebb too low. Heck, forget fame and fortune: You won't live to see tomorrow.



Move at your own speed with the "Jump" and "Step" buttons. If you've got a fast computer and like to watch the scenery go by, use "Step." Slower machines and impatient types will want to "Jump."



You won't get a chance to dream—sweetly or otherwise—unless you can fend off the Bad Dreams. Use the Dream Gun to shoot down the nightmares before they can infect your brains. Miss, and you'll wake up screaming.



Food, glorious food. OK, so it's just a bunch of synthetically derived sandwiches, but who cares? Pick your favorite ingredients and put 'em together. You can even pack a bag lunch for going exploring.



Stavie is one of the top producers on Alternate Earth. It pays to chat with her, even if you don't have any videos to send her yet. She may drop some hints about what type of videos she wants. But remember, phone calls cost money.



Betty Pink shows off her latest riffs on the L.A. Stage. A few shots of her could be worth a fortune to the right producer.



Edgar Death is king of the underground rock scene literally. Clicking on the letters lets you choreograph Edgar and his entourage for the benefit of the camera.

The Metal Lord isn't keen on off-world sleazeballs taking advantage of his Guitar Warriors. When the Warrior hits a chord, you must respond with the same chord to block it, then try to get in your own sonic blast. The chords are color-coded at first, but you'll have only your ear for music as the more difficult settings. Fortunately, they're all pretty basic chords—no Fiddlers here.



Survive hunger, thirst, and evil Guitar Warriors, and you just might make it to the Vid Hall. Don't just go running for the other side, though; that will cost you some serious Life Force points. If you can find a way to prove your loyalty to the Metal Lord first, he'll let you pass safely.


In the Distortion Dimensions, guitars are instruments of both creativity *and* destruction. Better axes deliver more powerful battle chords, but you'll need plenty of cash to buy the best.

Uh-oh. Looks like you did something stupid. Hope you saved your game. You should try this at an easier setting, maybe?





Great GOLF Guide

Welcome to the  Country Club.
Here, it's tee time anytime with seven
computer golf games that bring
the links to your PC.



erched atop the back tees at Harbour Town on Hilton Head Island, I'm ready to make my final run at a five-under-par 67. All I need is to hit a fairway, land on the green, and get down in two. Imagine, a middle handicapper ready to blow away one of the top courses in North America.

The breeze is blowing across the emerald fairway. Mangroves and water to the left, out-of-bounds and condos to the right. "Hit a little fade. Let the wind carry it to the right," I remind myself. My fingers are numb. The knees feel like rubber. I waggle. "This is no time to get nervous," the little voice pipes up. "Just put a good move on it and let it happen."

As I'm ready to send the dimpled devil screaming off into the beautiful blue sky, I hear a familiar voice yelling, "C'mon Jim, turn that thing off and come eat dinner."

I click too early, and the electronic ball sails into the great abyss. I drowned the little devil.

Golf is an obsession for millions of us who crowd courses in every corner of the globe. It's no wonder, then, that computer golf is almost as popular. With a PC and the right software, serious dimple-heads and golfing novices alike can get their fill of the game with the click of the mouse.

But all golf games are not created equal, so we've played and ranked the top seven PC links: Jack Nicklaus Golf & Course Design: Signature Edition, Links 386 Pro, Microsoft Golf 2.0, PGA Tour Golf 486, Picture Perfect Golf, Skins Game at Bighorn, and World Cup Golf Hyatt Dorado Beach. We also checked out the games for Macintosh, 3DO, Sega CD, and CD-i duffers.

Time to tee it and free it, Linkenstein.

By Jim Chiaffredo



Jack Nicklaus Golf & Course Design: Signature Edition

Bogey

Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition is the granddaddy of the current crop of PC golf games, created by Accolade—also the makers of the very first PC golf game, Mean 18. While Nicklaus provides fun on both sides of the ball with its ability to design a course and then play on it, its age is beginning to show.

The golfing portion of Signature Edition resembles an easy-to-play arcade game, with relatively few options. The linear power bar uses a three-click method to swing: Click once to start, again at the top of the back swing, and then again at contact. Along with the limited play, the game's graphics are fuzzy, and older versions use a wheel decoder for copyright protection that's more trouble than hitting out of U.S. Open rough.

On the other hand, the game's unique course designer really shines; it gives you a chance to pretend you're the new Robert Trent Jones. We've all cursed guys like him before, and Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition lets you prove that you can do it better. If you're good enough, you can submit your creation to an annual design competition sponsored by Accolade and Golden Bear Productions.

Accolade also sells Jack Nicklaus'



Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition looks and plays like an arcade game, but its course-designer feature can't be topped.

Signature Tour Vol I & II, which includes the game, along with the two available course collections.

The venerable program will be getting a much needed update later this year when Accolade releases Jack Nicklaus Golf Golden Bear Edition for Windows. The new game

will feature Nicklaus' own Colleton River Plantation and Country Club of the South courses. For more variety, you can buy the

PRO TIPS: Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition

- ▶ Be careful of the putting alignment. You have to get the hole between your putter and the alignment marker on the top of the screen.
- ▶ As with the real thing, if you're just off the green, it's better to putt. If you're in the second cut of rough, pull the putter out of the bag, and then go back to the wedge. The grid and pin stay in place while you're chipping. A great way to hole out.
- ▶ Looking for some tough courses? A guy nicknamed "Bubba" on CompuServe has a couple that'll "put a hurtin' on ya'll," as he so eloquently states.
- ▶ If you have a version of the game that still requires the decoder wheel, get the replacement executable file from Accolade's CompuServe forum that does not use copy protection. Copy the file (GOLFEXE) into your NICKLAUS directory.

upcoming Jack Nicklaus: The Course Designer and make your own Windows courses to play.

Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition is popular with computer golfers on CompuServe and America Online. You'll find plenty of original course designs that you'll be able to download. You could play a different course each day for the next few years—what a wonderful thought.

Birdie

Links 386 Pro

Links 386 Pro is as good as it gets for regular guys with regular computers; a 386 or slow 486 is all you'll need to play some serious golf at Harbour Town, the game's included course. (Access Software's CD version of Links, Links 386 CD, includes an additional course and fly-bys of every hole, along with additional sound effects.)

Links is easy to play for the uninitiated, but it offers myriad options to keep advanced players happy. You can even pick the color of your shirt.

The game's smooth fairways are lined with trees and condos, making for a realistic experience, and you can set the game's level



Links 386 Pro sets the standard for computer golf with its easy-to-use swing meter and customizable graphics.

of detail to match your graphics card and processor speed. Do you want to play through, or take time to smell the heather? Slowly it'll be if you like, as the screen can redraw one layer at a time.

Play is simple enough. The game's swing indicator has become the standard for the golf-sim set. An almost complete circle represents the top and bottom of your swing. Click to start the backswing, let go at the top, and

PRO TIPS: Links 386 Pro

- ▶ Play the game in the highest graphics resolution your video card and patience can endure.
- ▶ Practice, practice, practice. Don't be afraid to use a couple hundred Mulligans the first time out. There's no guilt here.
- ▶ Don't try and be John Daly. It's a lot easier to make good shots by not going too far past the top line of the swing gauge. Distance is cool, but not all that important at Harbour Town.
- ▶ Once you've got your "A" game together, play at the Pro level against one of the included tournament players.

then click again at contact. Click too early, and you put the banana on it. Wait too long, and you've sliced the ball into Never-Never-Land. It's as close to grabbing a victory grip and making a real pass as possible.

To achieve a comfortable swing in real golf, you'd have to go to the range and hit a couple hundred balls a day until your hands bleed. But Links Pro gives you the benefit of unlimited Mulligans. Where better to hone your skills than on the course itself?

Access sells Links Pro Macintosh, essentially the same game, for Mac owners. Links for Pentium, which will run on a 486 but requires

a Pentium to take advantage of all its features, will be available around the middle of the year. It will support 16 million colors instead of the current 256, along with sharper graphics. In the meantime, Links 386 Pro gives you the sights, sounds, and feel of the real thing.

And now, Links Pro 386 fans can always find a little friendly competition thanks to a new online service, The Links Tour. Members play in weekly regional foursomes, in which they try and qualify for national events and even a Pro Tour. (See "The Pro Shop" on page 36.)

Picture Perfect Golf

Par

If you want the most realistic golfing experience available on the PC, here's what to do: Go into your backyard, grab some sod, throw it on the floor next to your computer, turn on a fan, and then boot up Picture Perfect Golf. It's just like the box says: "Golf action so real you can almost smell the grass."

Unlike the other golf games that use digitized photos of real courses, Picture Perfect employs the actual photos. Every angle of every hole is captured. Harbour Town Golf Links is, once again, the home course. Lirig plans to release several additional courses this year, starting with The Resort Golf Course at Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, which should be available by the time you read this. Each course is constructed out of more than 2,500 photographs.

You see exactly what you'd see if you were ready to hit your next shot on this pristine piece of South Carolina real estate. While unique, the first-person perspective's absence of an onscreen golfer may bother players who want to see all the game's



For realistic scenery, Picture Perfect Golf can't be beat, but its first-person perspective makes it impossible to analyze your swing.

PRO TIPS: Picture Perfect Golf

Read the included README.TXT file. It includes valuable tips on configuring your machine to run the game efficiently.

- Play the game at the highest skill level. You can hit the ball farther without much loss of accuracy.
- Practice the feel of the swing meter. The gauge dots are in percentages of power, not distance. Once you get the hang of it, it's easy.

action, or who want to analyze their swing.

The ball lies below the course photo and game's control panel. To swing, you use the standard circular swing meter. The ball shoots out from underneath your viewpoint onto the actual photo of the target. Like Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition, Picture Perfect includes a practice green to avoid the need for unlimited Mulligans.

While some of the other games do a better job of recreating bounces and rolls, Picture Perfect is unmatched in its visual realism. There are no tedious redraws of the scenery; each photo instantly appears ready for the

next shot—even the ones you don't want to see, like on the edge of a lake. And Picture Perfect doesn't waste time looking for lost balls. Hit one in the trees, and it's a goner; drop another one and play from there. That's a course ranger's dream.

PGA Tour Golf 486

Eagle

The Big Show: the PGA Tour. Beautiful courses, colorful players, and high drama.

Electronic Arts' PGA Tour Golf 486 has it all, with one difference: You get to be a part of the action without struggling



PGA Tour Golf 486 tops the leader board with its high-resolution graphics and myriad options, but you need a Pentium to make the most of it.

Better Than a Mouse

The PC Golf is the ultimate joystick for computer golfers—that is, if your game of choice is Links 386 Pro or Picture Perfect Golf, the two games the system supports.

The PC Golf's 26-inch-long golf club has a real grip and steel shaft, with an infrared light source at the end of it. It feels pretty close to a full-length club, but you can't rest the infrared "clubhead" on the ground. The club's short length lets you take a full swing right in your living room.

The PC Golf's base unit sits flat on the floor and connects to your computer's serial port. The unit's sensors record the clubface angle and clubhead speed as you swing, and then send the information to your PC, where you'll see your shot played out.

You play Links or Picture Perfect just like you were using a mouse on your desktop, but you don't have to deal with the games' swing meters. PC Golf is a realistic addition to computer golf, and it's perfect for providing a golfing fix if you're snowed in or just don't have time to get to the real links. (Sports Sciences; 800-860-4727; PC, \$169)

If even an electronic golf club isn't real enough for you, look out for the Pro Play Golf System this summer. From joystick-maker ThrustMaster, the Pro Play will let you use your own clubs when playing your favorite computer-golf game. The system's sensor unit hooks up to your PC's serial port. You play with foam golf balls and swing right into the system's included net. (ThrustMaster; 503-639-3200; PC, \$799)



through Qualifying School.

In this slick simulator, you can play a regular round at one of three Tournament Player's Club courses—Summerlin in Las Vegas, River Highlands just outside of Hartford, Connecticut, or Sawgrass in Ponte

now-familiar semi-circle, but twisted into the shape of the club swing plane around the player. Different skill levels—Novice, Amateur, and Pro—change the way the meter operates.

Electronic Arts has put together a package that's a few buckets of range balls ahead of the competition. However, when it says 486, it means 486—or even a Pentium. The company claims that the game will run on a 486SX/33 with 4MB of RAM, but it's more like a slow walk. Do yourself a favor and make sure you have at least a 486/66 and 8MBs of RAM.

While the game's textures and player animations look like they were ripped right off the television, some of the other course graphics don't quite measure up, most notably the railroad ties around the 17th green at Sawgrass. Still, you can sit back and scrutinize the details using the game's snap-back camera feature. All in all, beautifully done.

Mac golfers can join the PGA, but they'll have to settle for Electronic Arts' previous version, PGA Tour Golf II.

PRO TIPS:

PGA Tour Golf 486

- Don't play the Pros until you're ready. You'll get sparked.
- Find a good par 5 on any of the three TPC courses and hack away for an hour or two. Start at Novice and work your way up to the Show.
- Unless you have a Pentium, make arrangements to prepare sandwiches between holes.
- Use infinite Mulligans—get yourself into a good practice distance and hack away.

Vedra, Florida, home of the PGA Tour. The game lets you challenge one of nine selected Touring Pros, including Lee Janzen, Tom Kite, and Fuzzy Zoeller, or play as one of the Pros themselves. You can get in a skins game against three of the nine players, or opt for match play or regular stroke play. It's a dream round any way you look at it.

Once you think you're bad enough to get it on against the big dogs, you can compete against 56 other Tour Pros at the Las Vegas Invitational, the Canon Greater Hartford Open, or the Tournament Players Championship.

The game's swing-meter gauge is the by-

Microsoft Golf 2.0

Birdie

If you're looking for a golf game for Windows, then you should ante up the greens fee for Microsoft Golf 2.0.

Written by Access, the makers of Links, Microsoft Golf 2.0 is essentially the same game with the addition of more flexible screen views, easier loading, and a help sys-

PRO TIPS: Microsoft Golf 2.0

- Don't be afraid to move fast through the ability ranks. They're fairly easy to master.
- Try recording a round and sending it to a friend to play. (Or send it to me—I'll play!)
- The best default set-up for all the windows: Open the Main View, Swing Control, and Shot Info windows. The Profile window shows up automatically as part of your pre-putt routine.
- Need a lesson? The Player Help section is chock-full of play enhancement tips that even hard-core golfers will find helpful.

tem. You load and start playing Microsoft Golf with just a couple clicks of the mouse, and you can play an entire round without ever touching the keyboard.

Like its Windows launch pad, Microsoft Golf has multiple desktop views. You can individually adjust every window to the



Microsoft Golf 2.0 Is Access Software's Links 386 Pro for Windows, period.

Leader Board

	Jack Nicklaus Signature Edition	Links 386 Pro	PGA Tour Golf 486	Microsoft Golf 2.0	Picture Perfect Golf	World Cup Golf Hyatt Dorado Beach	Skins Game at Bighorn
Animated Player	Male/Female	Male/Female, pick clothes and colors	Male, or play as one of 9 pros	Male/Female, pick clothes, hair, and skin color	n/a	Male	Male/Female
Courses available	Infinite with course-designer feature	14	3	11	2	1	1
E2 Minimum System Recommendations	386/16, 640KB RAM, VGA	386/16, 640KB RAM, Super VGA	486/66, 8MB RAM, Super VGA	486/33, 8MB RAM, Super VGA	386/33, 4MB RAM, Super VGA	386/33, 4MB RAM, Super VGA	486/33, 8MB RAM, Super VGA
Handicap	The course-designer's choice	An all-around game for anyone who plays	For the golfer who has everything—including a Pentium!	Links 386, with a Windows launch pad	For those who like to play it as they see it	Like Skins Game, it's easy on the eyes, but not on the play	Good looking, but frustrating to play

Golfing on CD-ROM Gaming Machines

Computer golfers have lots of options, but there's slim pickings for golf games on CD-based game platforms like 3DO, CD-i, and Sega CD. In general, they barely make the green.

Links for the Sega CD takes the tournament

here for its play ability and tried-and-true design. Although its resolution is lower than the PC version from Access, it sports the same polished look and intuitive interface. A simple tool bar controls club, shot type, stance, and pin distance. Even better, the game moves fast. (Virgin Interactive Entertainment; 800-874-4607; Sega CD, \$70)

World Cup Golf Hyatt Dorado Beach from U.S. Gold for the 3DO and Sega CD adds 32 international two-man teams from the actual World Cup, 15 game types, and a redesigned—but not necessarily improved—hit-



If variety is the spice of your life, try World Cup Golf Hyatt Dorado Beach for 3DO and Sega CD.



For a tried and true golfing experience on the Sega CD, pay the greens fee for Links.



Pebble Beach Golf Links for 3DO impresses with its large video players, but it's an amateur in terms of game play.



Palm Springs Open for CD-i was a winner in its time, but now it should be retired to the senior tour.

ball after a shot is unrealistic—drives look like duds until the screen refreshes and displays their landing. (Panasonic Software; 408-653-1896; 3DO, \$57.99)

Palm Springs Open, a 3-year-old CD-i offering from Philips Media Games, was revolutionary in its day. The first golf game to use photographs of real people and courses, it lives up play with the vocal talent of ABC broadcasters. It can't measure up to the newest PC or game-platform titles, but if there was a senior tour, Palm Springs Open might still have a chance. (Philips Media Games; 800-340-7888; CD-i, \$49.98)

most useful size: Main View, Swing Control, Shot Info, Profile, Advanced Shot Setup, Scorecard, Top View, and Green View. If you want, you could put them all up at once as you play, but you'd end up as confused as John Daly's agent, and your video would become as slow as Bernhard Langer in a major.

Microsoft Golf comes with the Firestone Country Club course, decked out in all its fall glory. In this world, the trees are just turning in Akron, and the fairways are immaculate. The graphics here look a little better than in Links Pro: The colors are more pronounced and varied, the views are breathtaking, and the fairways are tight from the tee boxes—a well-known Firestone trait.

The game lets you play your friends live or recorded, just like Links. If no friends are handy, try one of the recorded challengers. Be careful, though—this group is good.

If you're still playing with a 386 or slow

486, you may want to stick with the earlier version of Microsoft Golf; the new release's added enhancements take a lot more memory and disk space. But with a fast 486 Windows machine, this game is just the thing.

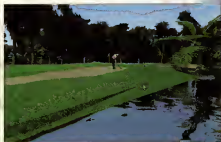
World Cup Golf Hyatt Dorado Beach

Bogey

If you've ever wondered what it would be like to play golf as an out-of-body experience, then tee up World Cup Golf Hyatt Dorado Beach.

Packed on two CDs, World Cup sports a very detailed course layout. Finely rendered trees, complete with afternoon shadows and textured fairways, give you a feel for the terrain, and the game's fade-in/fade-out feature is a classy touch that gives you a good look at the beautiful course. You'd swear you are hoofing along at Dorado Beach in Puerto

Rico looking for Davis Love III and Fred Couples, the two players that represented the U.S. in the 1994 World Cup event held at the resort. (The U.S. won again, by the way.)



World Cup Golf Hyatt Dorado Beach looks great, but play is difficult to control.

Unfortunately, the game's animated golfer looks like something out of a *Godzilla* movie—a pale guy dressed in black slacks and a white shirt with sideburns and a bad

haircut. Worse, he seems to be pasted on the screen about 50 feet away from you. You don't feel like you're playing the game; you feel like a spectator.

World Cup Golf's swing meter also departs from the industry standard, and it's

you finally get to the green, a different type of swing meter appears, and you have to use yet another clicking sequence to initiate the putt. And the game's confusing manual is no help.

World Cup Golf's beautiful scenery can't make up for its frustrating play. But if you like to watch, this may be the game for you.

shots that look on target end up out of bounds, so it's difficult to correct your aim and swing. In addition, instead of blazing up

PRO TIPS: World Cup Golf Hyatt Dorado Beach

- Don't like Puerto Rico in November? Adjust the weather or turn off the wind completely. Also experiment with the ground conditions by changing them from Min (driest) to Max (dampest).
- Right-click to clear the screen of all icons.
- You can hit a shot at more than 100% power by clicking to the right of the sweet spot, but if you make any errors, they'll be greatly magnified.
- Explore the terrain before taking a shot by dragging and clicking the crosshair across the screen. When you click, an information box pops up to tell you elevation, distance, surface, and geographical info.

difficult to understand, let alone master. The ball goes one way, you click somewhere near the bottom, click again somewhere near the top and then scratch your head wondering what went wrong.

Putting is even more of a mystery. Once

Skins Game at Bighorn

Bogey

Bighorn, the rugged jewel of Palm Desert, California, is a great golf course, but that doesn't make The Skins Game at Bighorn a great golf game. Fathom Pictures raises expectations with an artful interface, high-resolution photographs of the majestic course, large photo-realistic male and female golfers, and an intuitive swing meter. But your initial excitement may ebb when you make your first drive.

The best golf simulations recreate the exhilarating feeling of smashing the ball off the tee, watching it sail high into the distance, and seeing it fall, land, and roll to a stop, just as if you were on the course. You don't get that gratification in The Skins Game at Bighorn. Instead of viewing your drive, chip, or putt in its entirety, you seem to black out momentarily after your swing and revive just in time to see the ball drop to earth.

Because you see only the beginning and end of each shot, you can't always tell why your ball landed where it did. Many times,



Skins Game at Bighorn gives you breathtaking photos of the courses, but you can't get the big picture during play.


the fairway, your Titelist rolls like a refugee from an old "follow the bouncing ball" sing-along. Poor animation and subpar ball physics rule out ball shadows or varied bounces on different terrain.

An interesting approach on its own terms, this game disappoints when compared to Links and PGA 486. Their superior detail,

PRO TIPS: Skins Game at Bighorn

- Some course photos make it difficult to find the fairway or green when driving from elevated tees or chipping from the rough. Use the Lie feature often to see the lay of the land or to find your exact location after a shot. When aiming a shot, move your mouse's cursor to the top of the screen to display a red flag that indicates the cup's location.
- Greens in Bighorn can be unforgiving if you put too much or too little on a putt. Be sure to study the graph that shows if the approach to the cup is up or downhill.
- Listen to your caddy, actor Joe Bellan of Mel Brooks-movies fame. He can be a smart aleck, but his clues off the tee are especially valuable.

multiple camera angles, and effective balance of game play and visual flair make for a more appealing round of computer golf.

Jim Chiaffredo is the golf columnist for The Bradenton Herald, a Knight-Ridder newspaper in Bradenton, Florida. E's assistant editor Bill Meyer also contributed to this story. 

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Viacom New Media is joining the movie-game craze with Congo.



Spectrum HoloByte is releasing a flight-sim for novices, based on *Top Gun*.

From The Boob Tube and Silver Screen

Hollywood and Silicon Valley are getting more cozy all the time, and the result is a star-studded glut of games based on movies and TV shows. While titles like *Jurassic Park* and *Demolition Man* didn't do much for the art of game-making, developers and their Hollywood counterparts are hoping the next generation will perform a bit better.

Viacom New Media will release a game version of *Congo*, based upon the upcoming movie and Michael Crichton novel. Philips Media Games has a strong lineup of movie-related titles for 1996, including a game based on *The Crow*. In addition, fans of the direct-to-video horror series *The Puppet Master* will get an interactive version of *Puppet Wars* from Philips sometime in 1996. Also in 1996, Magnet Interactive Studios plans to ship *Hellraiser: Virtual Hell*, based on the Clive Barker *Hellraiser* movies.

If that's too long a wait, Sony Imagesoft



Star Trek's run of games continues with Spectrum HoloByte's *A Final Unity*.

will ship *Johnny Mnemonic*, based on the William Gibson screenplay this May. (See "A Hole in the Head," February 1995, page 67.) This all-video release is most notable for what it lacks: an onscreen interface. Forget about dialog boxes and point-and-click; instead, you'll just hit keyboard keys at appropriate moments to guide the action.

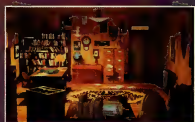
Meanwhile, Spectrum HoloByte is readying the release of games based on *Top Gun* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

Looking for Adventure

Adventure games continue to appeal to millions of game players, and developers have a new crop of titles to keep fans happy.

Take Two Interactive is working on an adventure/thriller due in November called *Ripper: A Cyberpunk Mystery*. Jack the Ripper is back in town, looking for minds to carve instead of bodies. It's up to you to stop him.

Ripley's *Believe It or Not!* aficionados should check out *Ripley's Believe It or Not! The Riddle of Master Lu* from Sanctuary Woods. In this spring release, you lead Robert Ripley in a hunt for a lost artifact that could initiate a world war. Along the way, you'll get a close look at some of the more unusual items in Ripley's famous collection of the bizarre and strange.



Check out the bizarre world of *Ripley's Believe It or Not! In the Riddle of Master Lu*.

In addition to the imminent release of *Alone In The Dark 3*, I-Motion is working on the spring/summer release of *Prisoners*

of *Ice*, inspired by the H.P. Lovecraft novel *The Mountain of Madness*. Players must unravel a mystery that dwells deep beneath the Antarctic ice.

Simon the Sorcerer, featuring a teenage wizard still perfecting

his magic, will get its share of play this year. Activision is releasing the original Simon on CD-ROM in March, while *Psychosis* plans to ship a game tentatively called

Simon the Sorcerer 2 later in the year.

Psychosis also has *Guilty*, the sequel to the unspectacular *Innocent Until Caught*, on the front burner. You can choose to once again portray the sleazy Jack T. Ladd or pick the wisecracking policewoman Ysanne Andropath in this journey through cults and casinos with four available game options for both characters.



Spend some time in cougar skin in I-Motion's *Alone In The Dark 3*.



Top Gun, the action/flight game, will include live-action video and an easy-to-use interface for flight-sim novices. **Star Trek: The Next Generation: A Final Unity**, features the voices of the show's main characters and a plot consistent with the series.

Alone in the Dark creators I-Motion plan to ship an adventure game this summer based on the 1982 movie *Marco Polo*, which starred Burt Lancaster and Leonard Nimoy. Not to be left out, GTE Interactive is working on a CD-ROM title based on the summer film and cult comic book *Tank Girl*.

But no one is jumping on the interactive handwagon more than Fox Interactive, whose movie- and TV-based lineup for late 1995 and early 1996 includes **Die Hard with a Vengeance**, based on a planned third *Die Hard* movie; **Return of the Apes**, from the upcoming Oliver Stone *Planet of the Apes* continuation; **The X-Files**, based on the popular TV show; and **Virtual Springfield**, in which you explore *The Simpsons'* home town.

For a more educational trip, look for an adventure title based on The Learning Channel's *Connections*² show this fall. The CD-ROM, tentatively titled **Connections**, will challenge users to solve a variety of historical and scientific puzzles similar to those on the TV program. James Burke, host of *Connections*², will guide players on their quest.

Let's Not Be PC

Nor all the cool stuff in '95 is happening on the PC platform. The set-top box vendors are about to unleash their latest high-performance hardware on the world. Some of them even outpace arcade machines—in fact, **Nintendo's Ultra 64** actually began as an arcade machine.

One of the more unusual entrants has to be Nintendo's **Virtual Boy**. This 32-bit, 3-D system sits on a tabletop bipod. Users peer into the binocular-like unit at its dual, red-and-black LED displays while manipulating a double-sided pistol-grip controller. The displays give games an interesting yet limited 3-D look that can be a bit overwhelming. Two of the sub-\$200 units can be connected for team play or competition.

In the mainstream, Atari is finally shipping a CD-ROM unit for the **Jaguar**. The \$149 drive comes with the **Virtual Light Machine**, a trippy light show that responds to music from audio CDs played in the drive. Several games, including **Battlemorph**, **Blue Lightning**, **Highlander**, **Demolition Man**, and **Creature Shock**, are on the schedule for the Jaguar CD.

CD-i isn't dead, either. Games available

early this year include **Secret Mission** and **Flashback** for standard CD-i machines and, later this year, **Crime Patrol** for CD-i with digital video. In the spring, **NFL Instant Replay**, taken from IBM's "You Make the Call" commercials, will ship for CD-i with digital video. Originally due at the end of 1994 and now promised for summer 1995 is **Thunder in Paradise**, based on the Florida-based TV show starring Hulk Hogan, Carol Alt, and Chris Lemmon, for CD-i with digital video. Later in the year, look for the gender-neutral **Labyrinth of Crete** on CD-i and **Dead End**, a futuristic drive-and-shoot game, on CD-i with digital video and PC CD-ROM.

Sony has also been showing off the **PlayStation**, its powerful new gaming system rumored to be slated for official U.S. launch this May. The company claims that more than 100 developers will be writing games for the platform, including Acclaim and GTE Interactive. One of the first titles will be Viacom New Media's **Aeon Flux**, based on the animated character from MTV's *Liquid Television*. The unofficial word from early users is that the PlayStation beats out the upcoming Nintendo Ultra 64 and **Sega Saturn**.

Get In On the Action

It's hard to believe that the PC was once considered an inadequate platform for fast-action games. That's not the case anymore, and a new crop of even more exciting titles—many able to take advantage of 3-D graphics boards—is on the way.

GTE Interactive's **FX Fighter** utilizes Argonaut's "Blazing Render," or BRender, graphics technology to create a world of smooth-moving polygon characters anxious to rip each other's heads off. The fighting game, due by this summer, will also take advantage of certain 3-D accelerator hardware, including Argonaut's BRender cards, for even better performance.

47-Tek, the San Francisco game developer fixated on true 3-D fighting games, is working on a couple of new accelerator-ready titles. **Quicksilver** and **Aquanuts** are due out any day now, while **Hardjack**, an interactive 3-D movie combining Mario-esque platform action with intense fighting, is due in October.

Take Two Interactive, the folks behind *Hell* and *Star Crusader*, are working on a new action game called **Cybercycles: Maximum Roadkill**. Become a contestant in Thrash Race, the futuristic TV show, in which your goal is to survive by killing the other contestants and progressing to the next level.

If you'd rather fly than fight, Rocket Science Games will have a new

DOS CD-ROM title this spring tentatively called **Flying Aces**. Soar, dive, bomb, and shoot in this humorous all-video PC game.

UK-based Gremlin Interactive has signed with U.S. Gold to distribute its games in the States, including the upcoming network-ready race-and-shoot game **SlipStream 5000**. Players will choose from several characters and flying cars in a battle to become the top gun.

If you want something with more depth, check out Looking Glass Technologies' latest "Immersive Reality" title, **Terra Nova: Strike Force Centauri**. Players don high-tech battle suits and attempt to defeat the Earth Hegemony on four different planets.

New World Computing has put a new face and spin on action/adventure games in **Wetlands**, an animation-style thriller coming in summer, which challenges you to capture a weather-controlling madman.



Smooth-moving polygon fighters highlight GTE Interactive's FX Fighter.

Hot Times for Hardware

Software is key, but the right hardware can turn a fun game into a fantastic one. Several hardware makers think they have the toys you need to enhance your gaming experience.

Top-flight joystick maker ThrustMaster recently unveiled three products, including the **Pro Play Golf System**. This high-tech swing analyzer should be available this summer for less than \$800. It will come with training software and be compatible with several golf games. The best thing about the Pro Play? You can use your own clubs. Just make sure you have enough clearance, or you could put divots in your living room ceiling.

ThrustMaster also announced the **XL Action Controller**, an inexpensive flight-stick-like device with three glow-in-the-dark response buttons and a four-way thumb switch. The \$34.95 'stick is available now.

If you're into high-end flight control, you can also pick up the company's **F-16 TQS**, the quadrant system controller complement to the F-16 FLCs joystick. The \$199.95 controller, which will be available in April, includes a thumb trackball, throttle tension adjustment, radar switch, antennae, and an "authentic" military design.

Meanwhile, Advanced Gravis now has an alternative to the Phoenix Flight & Weapons Control System called the **Firebird**. The new 'stick loses the Phoenix's rudder controls, but gains customization software that is even easier to use and comes at a lower price, \$99.



Move your ship or player with a simple tilt of the hand with *The Bird*.

Also, if you're more interested in sound than 'sticks, Gravis' **UltraSound ACE** might be the ticket. The ACE adds wavetable support to any 8- or 16-bit sound card without any special connectors. Just drop it in a free bus slot, load the software, and you're off. The sub-\$100 card also provides 16-bit digital sound for any titles that support the Gravis Ultrasound standard.

Suncom Technologies is also jumping into the hardware fray with an upgrade to its popular FX-2000 and a new programmable PC joystick. The \$39.95 **FX-3000** shares the same organic look of the 2000, but adds four-button firepower, a headphone jack, and a volume control. The **SFX** joystick lists for \$29.95 and lets players program as many as twelve sets of keyboard commands into the pad at once—just in time for the latest round of PC fighting games like *Rise of the Robots* and *FX Fighter*.

PC shooters will get some new iron (okay, plastic) to pack when American Laser Games ships the PC version of its **Gamegun** this summer.

And for those who like flight sticks but don't want to be fixed to their desk, look for the PC version of Vireal's **Total Control**. This sub-\$30 hand-held controller reacts to the tilt of your hand and offers easy access to thumb and trigger-finger buttons.

If you want something even less traditional, look out for **The Bird**. Visually more like Spock's phaser than a joystick, this wireless wonder lets you control the action by simply tilting and rotating your hand or manipulating its top- and front-mounted control buttons. It should hit the shelves for less than \$100 if the Australian manufacturer can find a distributor in the States.

Everybody Wants to Rule the World

Who wouldn't want to own and run their own farm, country, or world? Simulation games let you do just that, and this trio of new releases offers you even more new virtual experiences to try your hand at.

I-Motion is working on **A-IV NETWORKS**, in which players take the helm of a \$4 trillion global empire known as the A-IV Group. At the top, they must contend with such problems as nasty taxes, brutal investment losses, and hostile leveraged buyouts. Look for it by summer.

Less traditional, but just as interesting, Velocity will give players a chance to run their first virtual party this spring. In a game tentatively called **Mega Rave**, you control the social scene as you strive to hold the ultimate bash. Move "travlers" around and hope they hit it off, or offer them some "smart drinks" to boost their energy levels.

In Impressions' **PowerHouse**, you take over one of four global energy companies. Develop alternate power sources, discover new technologies, and work with foreign governments as you attempt to dominate the world's energy supply.



Mega Rave challenges you to hold the ultimate party.

BACK... WITH A VENGEANCE!

Best
Role-Playing Game
of the Year
• PC Gamer
• Strategy Plus
• CD-ROM Review

The world of Arkania returns with incredible sound, speech and music, spectacular graphics... and an experience you won't forget!

Strategy Plus (September 1994) observed, "...massive improvements on both graphics and sound fronts."

PC Gamer (September 1994) noted, "...impressive... a new angle on the classic role-playing adventure..."

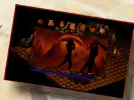


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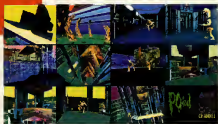
Coming this spring, **JAGGED ALLIANCE**. Watch for it!

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3DO Keeps on Ticking

Despite U.S. sales said to be in the 150,000 range (with worldwide sales around 500,000), 3DO continues to attract games and hardware makers.

Panasonic unveiled the **FZ-10 REAL 3DO Interactive Multiplayer**, a redesigned clamshell player with new controllers and a built-in memory manager to improve game saving.



Don a jet pack in Any Channel's **PO'ed**.

Goldstar previously joined competitor Panasonic in producing both a 3DO player and an MPEG video decoder for the system. Now, it's aping Panasonic again and starting up a game development division. Goldstar's software developers are reportedly working on four titles and plan to ship about 25 by the end of the year.

Some 150 3DO titles are currently available worldwide, with dozens more slated for release by the end of 1995, including 3DO versions of popular PC games such as **Doom**, **Doom II**, **Myst**, **Cyberia**, and **The 11th Hour**. Also, the arcade monster-fighting hit **Primal Rage** is expected on 3DO by fall of 1995.

L3 Interactive is developing titles specifically for the high-end game system. The company recently released **Slopestyle**, an interactive snowboarding tutorial, and is busily at work on an in-line skating tutor, possibly hosted by Rick Moranis. Also, Doom-style games will get a new twist this spring in **PO'ed** from Any Channel. This fully 3-D first-person shooter has all the enemies and weapons that blast 'em fans can handle—and a jet pack, too.

Finally, 3DO is circulating rumors about its upcoming second-generation **M2 Accelerator**, a 64-bit 3DO add-on scheduled to ship by year's end. 3DO claims initial tests on early models display graphics performance that is five times better than Sony's impressive **PlayStation**.

Think Ahead

There's still something satisfying about outsmarting an artificially intelligent opponent. Strategy games are designed to manufacture that feeling of satisfaction, even if it takes hours of work—er, play.

Civil War buffs will be able to fight it out all over again in **The Civil War** from Empire Interactive. The new one-or-two-player strategy game, due out in March, covers the period from 1861 to 1864, and if the Confederacy is still alive at the end, it wins. Meanwhile, in **Red Ghost**, you control a team of 16 commandos of various nationalities, genders, and skills—all dedicated to thwarting the Lenin-era Red Ghost terrorists. Look for the Ghost, slick graphics and all, to make an appearance on store shelves in June.

Anyone who likes MicroProse's "Master" titles should check out New World Computing's **MechLords**, which is in development from SimTex—the creators of **Master of Orion** and **Master of Magic**. As a young noble in a far-off universe, you must ascend the ladder of power using your wits and might. It should be available this July.

Impressions has an impressive 1995 lineup for strategy gamers, including March's **Breach 3**. Guide your men through various missions against aliens and robots. Select short or long campaigns as you direct the action.

If you like unusual premises, look into Sales Curve Interactive's **Gender Wars**. In the far future, political correctness has driven a permanent rift between men and women. Unfortunately, both sides must still breed to survive, and that means raids on the opposite gender. Look for it late this year.



Relive America's bloodiest conflict in Empire Interactive's **The Civil War**.

Break Out the Heavy Machinery

The number of flight, space, naval, sub, and racing sims is growing like crazy, because there is nothing quite like the feeling of strapping yourself to tons of virtual steel and horsepower and taking a ride. With role-playing and adventure game companies trying their luck in this new high-tech genre in 1995, this could be your year to indulge.

Strategic Simulations plans to release its first submarine simulator, **Silent Hunter**, this June. Expect it to be authentic: World War II sub commander William "Bud" Gruner assisted SSI in designing the game.

Hitting shelves about now, GT Interactive's **SuperKarts** pits you against computer-controlled and human go-kart racers on 16 different tracks.

If you are into heavier hardware, Activision's **MechWarrior2: The Clans** is under construction and scheduled for a late spring or early summer release. Modern support means you can take on a friend—or an enemy—in head-to-head action.

Flight-sim fans are still drooling over Looking Glass Technologies' **Flight Unlimited**. If you found it a bit too passive, though, watch the horizon for a combat flight-sim using the same engine late this year.

Further on up the road, Take Two Interactive is planning a follow-up to their popular space-sim **Star Crusader**. **Death Crusader** is slated for release in February 1996 and continues the bloody struggle in the **Ascalon** Rift.

Finally, "Wild Bill" is back. J.W. Stealey—MicroProse founder and simulation fanatic—has formed Interactive Magic. Not surprisingly, one of the company's first products will be **Apache-Gunship**, a high-res helicopter-sim due on store shelves shortly.



Flight Unlimited is a feast for the eyes.

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They're On a Role...

Role-playing is anything but a dead art. Despite the discontinuation of an exclusive agreement between Strategic Simulations (SSI) and role-playing specialists TSR, SSI has a sequel to the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* *Ravenloft: Strahd's Possession* and a completely new RPG series in the works.

Ravenloft: Stone Prophet uses the same free-scrolling 3-D engine as its predecessor, but adds an Egyptian theme as players struggle to defeat the mummified pharaoh Anhktep. In May, SSI plans to release

Thunderscape, the first RPG based on its new fantasy environment, *World of Aden*. A whole new high-performance 3-D engine has been developed for the new series.

Magic: The Gathering, the card game from Wizards of the Coast, has become a

star in the world of board games. Soon computer players can have their own version, too, with **Magic: The Gathering** from MicroProse. The officially licensed game will feature thousands of cards and will support single- and multiplayer games.



Prime Time Sports

Sports games keep playing, no matter who's on strike. Whether or not baseball gets its act in gear, 1995 will see a slew of new titles designed to feed our fascination with highly paid athletes and the wonderful things they do to entertain us.

Time Warner Interactive has signed deals with Wayne Gretzky and the National Hockey League Players' Association to create **Wayne Gretzky and the NHLPA All Stars** for PC CD-ROM this fall.

Stat-crazed baseball fans who don't go for arcade play can pick up **Sports Illustrated Presents MicroLeague Baseball '95** in the summer. If you want to play your ball under Windows, check out **Microsoft Baseball** in late spring or early summer. This slick ballpark simulation is based on Stormfront Studios' Tony LaRussa Baseball engine, but without Tony. It even works over local-area networks, so you can enjoy America's Pastime when you're supposed to be working.

PC golfers looking for something new may be interested in Accolade's fall release of **ack Nicklaus: Golf: Golden Bear Edition** for Windows. Players will get the chance to compete against Nicklaus on two of his signature courses; **Jack Nicklaus: The Course** (Accolade) is scheduled for simultaneous release. (For more information, see "Great Golf Guide" on page 50.)



Take on Jack on his own courses in **Jack Nicklaus: Golden Bear Edition**.



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TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

900 MHz breakthrough!

New technology launches wireless speaker revolution...

Recoton develops breakthrough technology which transmits stereo sound through walls, ceilings and floors up to 150 feet.

By Charles Anton

If you had to name just one new product "the most innovative of the year," what would you choose? Well, at the recent *International Consumer Electronics Show*, critics gave Recoton's new wireless stereo speaker system the *Design and Engineering Award* for being the "most innovative and outstanding new product."

Recoton was able to introduce this whole new generation of powerful wireless speakers due to the advent of 900 MHz technology. This newly approved breakthrough enables Recoton's wireless speakers to rival the sound of expensive wired speakers.

Recently approved technology. In June of 1989, the Federal Communications Commission allocated a band of radio frequencies stretching from 902 to 928 MHz for wireless, in-home product applications. Recoton, one of the world's leading wireless speaker manufacturers, took advantage of the FCC ruling by creating and introducing a new speaker system that utilizes the recently approved frequency band to transmit clearer, stronger stereo signals throughout your home.

150 foot range through walls!

Recoton gives you the freedom to listen to music wherever you want. Your music is no longer limited to the room your stereo is in. With the wireless headphones you can listen to your TV, stereo or CD player while you move freely between rooms, exercise or do other activities. And unlike infrared headphones, you don't have to be in a line-of-sight with the transmitter, giving you a full 150 foot range.

The headphones and speakers have their own built-in receiver, so no wires are needed between you and your stereo. One transmitter operates an unlimited number of speakers and headphones.



Recoton's transmitter sends music through walls to wireless speakers over a 75,000 square foot area.

Crisp sound throughout your home. Just imagine being able to listen to your stereo, TV, VCR or CD player in any room of your home without having to run miles of speaker wire.

Plus, you'll never have to worry about range because the new 900 MHz technology allows stereo signals to travel over distances of 150 feet or more through walls, ceilings and floors without losing sound quality.

One transmitter, unlimited receivers. The powerful transmitter plugs into a headphone, audio-out or tape-out jack on your stereo or TV component, transmitting music wirelessly to your speakers or headphones. The speakers plug into an outlet. The one transmitter can broadcast to an unlimited number of stereo speakers and headphones. And since each speaker contains its own built-in receiver/amplifier, there are no wires running from the stereo to the speakers.

Full dynamic range. The speaker, mounted in a bookshelf-sized acoustically constructed cabinet, provides a two-way bass reflex design for individual bass boost control. Full dynamic range is achieved by the use of a 2" tweeter and 4" woofer. Plus, automatic digital lock-in

a bookshelf-sized acoustically constructed cabinet, provides a two-way bass reflex design for individual bass boost control. Full dynamic range is achieved by the use of a 2" tweeter and 4" woofer. Plus, automatic digital lock-in



Breakthrough wireless speaker design blankets your home with music.

tuning guarantees optimum reception and eliminates drift. The new technology provides static-free, interference-free sound in virtually any environment. These speakers are also self-amplified; they can't be blown out no matter what your stereo's wattage.

Stereo or hi-fi, you decide. These speakers have the option of either stereo or hi-fi sound. You can use two speakers, one set on right channel and the other on left, for full stereo separation. Or, if you just want an extra speaker in another room, set it on mono and listen to both channels on one speaker. Mono combines both left and right channels for hi-fi sound. This option lets you put a pair of speakers in the den and get full stereo separation or put one speaker in the kitchen and get complete hi-fi sound.



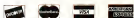
These wireless stereo headphones have a built-in receiver.

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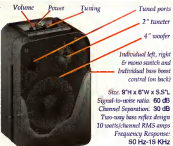
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Recoton's Design and Engineering Award



Magic Carpet

By Barry Brenesal

When the Gods created the World, they loaded it with magical power. But a host of rival wizards foolishly abused that power, until one terribly misdirected spell finally sundered the world into 50 pieces. Only when you (the guilty wizard's apprentice) have freed each global fragment from the evil that menaces it will the World once again be whole—and you'll be allowed to leave the computer for a bathroom break.

That's the plotline, more or less, behind Electronic Arts' latest Bullfrog release, *Magic Carpet*. In any case, the story isn't really important; it's merely a clever excuse to wreak havoc in 50 different, randomly created environments, each presenting increasingly difficult challenges and unique three-dimensional landscapes. Duck behind mountains and dodge arrows as you maneuver your carpet around a rival wizard's castle, throwing lightning bolts all the while. Circle down into a narrow pit and try to quickly steal one of 24 spells before its demonic guard can pound you into genie fodder. Gather spell-powering Mana everywhere you go.

First-person real-time action/adventures are very popular, thanks to the success of *Doom* and its imitators. Gamers love the visual realism and the challenge of combining sharp reflexes with strategic thinking. With *Magic Carpet*, though, Bullfrog gives the genre a boost, adding simple flight-sim elements and relying on high-end computers for detailed graphics resolution; lots of independently moving monsters; larger, more complex landscapes; and slicker special effects.

The results are impressive—less for adding novel features to the genre than for following through on so many implications of earlier, similar games. Consider special effects. Haven't you wished that the next time you missed a Redubikan Megroid with your Zhlorphing Ray, the blast would at least vaporize a piece of the crumbling wall behind it? Rejoice! When you incinerate a Giant Worm with dozens of firebombs in *Magic Carpet*, some of the desert sand superheats and quickly cools into gray

slag. Nearby trees burst into flame. (Watch it spread; hear the crackle of the fire grow into a roar as you fly straight through the inferno.)

Or take monsters. In most games they're fast, furious, large and deadly, but hardly smart enough to get a driving permit. Each of *Magic Carpet*'s 14 monster types—from Dragons to Spell-Stealing Imps to Emu-Riding Archers—approaches battle with a different set of objectives, skills, and strategies. Each creature in a group makes its own decisions with finely tuned artificial intelligence. Some learn to mimic your own tactics, or counter them with new solutions



Try to shoot down any rival balloons that are retrieving Mana near your castle.

W
I
T
H



• Use the first few levels to become familiar with your carpet's operation. It's essential later on.

• Even civilians have some Mana. Cast Possess spells at their buildings to gain control of the Mana. (But don't accidentally blast them!) • If you're being harassed by a localized infestation of slow-moving monsters, try destroying your current castle (SHIFT+L) and recasting the Castle Spell—right on top of the monsters. Keep doing this until you've squashed them all, then cast Possess spells to collect their Mana. • At higher levels, lure nearby monsters into a rival wizard's castle, then rise and fly away. They'll tear the place apart for you. • When your Health Bar gets close to critical, highlight it out of the current battle area for some healing. You can't save the game in the middle of a level, so if you die, you'll have to start that level over again.

Magic Carpet

Electronic Arts
800-245-4525

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 486/33, 8MB RAM, MS-DOS 5.0, Super VGA, mouse
List Price: \$59.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Magic Carpet is a state-of-the-art real-time combat-sim that soaks up computer resources and sprays out pure magic.



until they achieve success. The result? *Arabian Nights*-style opponents who fight more like the top cadets in Wing Commander III.

If you'd rather substitute human opponents for computer ones, Magic Carpet allows as many as eight networked wizards to match wits and might on a single level. Unfortunately, there's no provision for multilevel, multiplayer conflict, because all surviving wizards move on to the next "world" when any single player achieves a pre-stated goal.

Once you've met the conditions for victory on any given level, the computer dispassionately rates your performance. Don't be surprised if you garner less than 60 percent, since some of Magic Carpet's obstacles are remarkably tough—and over time, to keep you interested, they get tougher. You'll encounter high-level vampires that steal your Mana, rendering you magicless, and volcano-infested landscapes whose spewing lava can instantly transform you into Fried-Apprentice-On-Toast.

You also get congratulations from the Richard Burton-like voice of your late wizard mentor every time you complete a level. Unfortunately, the comments are general, not specific to your performance. They would be much more telling if he referred to the victory stats you see, or—better still—formulated a reasonably accurate criticism of your latest accomplishments.

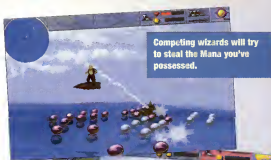
The navigational controls for your piece of magic floor-covering are deceptively simple compared to vehicular combat in most games; they are easy to learn but very difficult to master, involving combinations of keyboard and mouse movements. Also complicating things are the 24 spells you try to acquire, because—regardless of how many spells you know—you can have only two active at any one time, attached to your left and right mouse buttons. The spells are easy enough to swap out, but the changes occur in real time, and your opponents are never gracious enough to patiently wait while you replace a simple Shield spell with the enormously impressive Raise Dead Army.

Tough as Magic Carpet is, the documentation makes it unnecessarily tougher. The literary style and organization are fine, but when a box mea-

sures 10 inches by 7 inches, it's unacceptable to throw in elaborate notes that are smaller than 5 inches by 5 inches. The documentation's thumbnail spell symbols are difficult to make out, and the thumbnail monster images are indecipherable Rorschach inkblots.

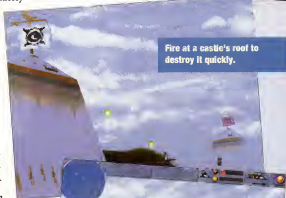
Magic Carpet's elaborate realism also comes at a price: It runs at a crawl on anything less than a fast 486 with a good disk cache. And the game really requires a Pentium to run adequately in its highest Super VGA mode. You're welcome to try it on a lesser machine, but you'll be flying your rug with the parking brakes on.

Still, that's no reason to avoid Magic Carpet. In fact, it's a good reason to buy a new computer. With its spectacular 3-D landscapes and movement, truly special special effects, furious battles, and highly intelligent monsters, Magic Carpet zooms past most flying games and makes Doom and its Club of Clones look about as exciting as PacMan.



Competing wizards will try to steal the Mana you've possessed.

When a swarm of creatures is chasing you, reverse and fire.



Fire at a castle's roof to destroy it quickly.

Collecting Mana is the key to success in Magic Carpet.



Giant bees stalk you in the air while phantom armies shoot at you from the ground.



King's Quest VII: The Princeless Bride

By Al Giovetti

Win CD
DOS CD



Rosella's looking for her prince.

S In Chapter Six, plug the Mysterious Device into the wall socket immediately upon entering the Volcano control room. • If you can't hear the sound, enter the crystal ball of the three Fates by plucking the strings of the harp, from left to right in this order: 1, 5, 6, 4. • Use the Magic Wand on the false Troll King in the Volcano control room, but first change the T for Troll to F for Fairy by clicking on the handle of the wand. • Give good water to the desert spirit and choose the horn and the "big bug" reducing powder; then walk directly north to return to the desert oasis. • To get to Etheria, you must give a bone to the horseman's dog, give the dog's medal to the black-caped lady, use the fire-cracker on the mausoleum's lock, use the mausoleum skull on the horseman, and use the horseman's fife to call the horse. • Use salt from the front of the idol pool in Chapter One to enter the faux shop in Faldalar.

S Because the music, speech, and animation play off the CD-ROM drive, the program slows down significantly on machines with less than 16MB of RAM, even though the recommended system is 8MB of RAM. Also, disk caching may play havoc with the game's intelligent swap-file system.

Princess Rosella has a problem: Her mother, Queen Valanice, is pressuring her to marry the first available eligible prince. So when a magical portal opens in a nearby pond, Rosella jumps through, seeking escape and adventure. Her mother jumps into the pond after her, but succeeds only in watching her daughter snatched away by a hairy, green arm. Thus begins King's Quest VII: The Princeless Bride, which takes the two heroines through six beautifully illustrated lands, populated with a cast of 80 interesting and cleverly animated characters.

Four separate animation houses in New York, South Carolina, Russia, and Croatia produced 40,000 hand-drawn cels for the game. These cels were then used to produce King's Quest VII's 100-plus minutes of colorful animation. The result is computer animation that is more effective in creating a fantasy environment than any game maker's previous attempts.

Sierra has completely done away with its function-key-and-icon interface. King's Quest VII features a new interface with a wand-shaped cursor that automatically determines whether to pick up, move, read, or otherwise manipulate objects within the intricate settings. An intelligent inventory system prevents you from discarding needed items, and items usually disappear after they've fulfilled their usefulness. You can save only one game at a time, but you can always pick up games again just before the fatal mistake, or at the beginning of one of the six "chapters."

The Princeless Bride's puzzle difficulty is about average for this type of adventure game, and in several locations you have a choice between two different paths to solve the same puzzle. The one music-based puzzle is impossible for the hearing-impaired or any players who have not properly configured their sound cards for Windows. You'll also need your sound card to hear the dialog. Voice actors provide speech throughout the game, but a rough version of the text does appear when you disable all the



You'll visit many colorful, highly detailed locations in King's Quest VII.

sound drivers. A high-quality, context-sensitive orchestral soundtrack plays throughout the game.

Unfortunately, King's Quest VII suffers from more than a few technical problems. Slow CD-ROM access causes significant delays when speech, animation, and music is being played from or loaded into a hard disk-based swap file. While several advanced programming techniques try to keep things running smoothly, the game runs slowly even on a 486/50 with 8MB of RAM. And while King's Quest runs in Windows in hopes of avoiding DOS compatibility problems, it encounters a whole new world of Windows incompatibilities, including driver conflicts and memory shortages. A DOS version that will supposedly fix these problems should be out by the time you read this.

Even with its technical difficulties, King's Quest VII is worth the trouble. The game is an excellent animated interactive adventure, with a professional score, hand-drawn animation, and trimmings to rival a Disney animated feature.

King's Quest VII: The Princeless Bride

Sierra On-Line
800-757-7707

Platform: Win CD, DOS CD
Requires: 386/25, 8MB RAM, Windows 3.11, Super VGA
List Price: \$64.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

Despite some technical glitches and heavy system requirements, King's Quest VII delivers animation that measures up to Disney standards.

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Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller

By Barry Brenesal

Collect all you can.
It is an adventure
game, after all.



You'll take this Hell of a boat ride more than once.



Beauty awaits, if you know
the password.



It pays to get a head in Hell.



● Try to pick your potential teammates wisely. You want to get a full spectrum of useful skills and crucial

Inventory items. ● A severed head can make an excellent traveling companion. ● Don't bail out of even seemingly pointless conversations. You never know where they may lead. ● The word "sesame" can open more than just an Arabian Knight's cavern. ● You can't win battles by sheer force. Watch your opponents carefully to gauge your approach.

You may think the country's going to hell, but in Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller, we've got the opposite problem. It's 2095 A.D., and a political/religious party called The Hand of God wields total power. Somehow the group has connected with the dimension of Hell and set the gate to the underworld in Washington, D.C.

Demons walk the streets of America. High-tech sciences are illegal, and all crimes are punishable by imprisonment in Hell. But something potentially worse is going on, as two Hand of God field agents, Gideon Eshanti and Rachel Braque, discover when they're set up by their superiors and accused of crimes they never committed. You play as either Eshanti or Braque (although they always work as a team) as they recruit compatriots, solve dozens of ingenious puzzles, locate artifacts and information, and battle demonspawn and Hell itself to clear their names.

This role-playing/graphics adventure combo is the brainchild of John Antinori and Laura Kambo, who produced *Bloodnet: A Cyberpunk Gothic*. The two games share a futuristic, morally disintegrating landscape where ancient evils—vampires in *Bloodnet*, hellish demons in *Hell*—have returned to rule. Both are nonlinear in terms of actions you must undertake to succeed, and have plenty of character interaction, cyberpunk dialog, and tongue-in-cheek attitude. Each also contains enough lengthy, obsessive game play to make you lose your job or lower your grade-point average.

It's *Hell*'s CD-ROM visuals and audio that make the difference. The new game replaces static graphics with live video footage and ray-traced animation. Actors speak the lines that were formerly displayed on the screen, although you can opt for a text mode.

Hell's Super VGA full-screen images amplify the mood, with dramatic touches of color offset-

ting the otherwise oppressive atmosphere. However, the game's ray-traced characters fare less successfully. Devoid of personal features, their mannequin-like movements are limited to brief, endless loops of a single action—such as turning left and extending a hand. Repeating this kind of gesture more than a dozen times in a single conversation can get distracting.

Mixing an occasional live actor with these ray-traced characters seems to emphasize the problems with the animation. The acting itself is variable, with Dennis Hopper predictably good and Stephanie Seymour amazingly bad. Her attempts at dialogue are particularly awful, but that's not too surprising; *Hell*'s stylized dialog reads better than it sounds. You may want to switch off Ms. Seymour's voice and turn on the text mode instead.

Some games are all flash and no content, but here it's the flash that sometimes misfires. If you can look past the spotty visuals, you'll find an unusually rich, exciting game experience in *Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller*.

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller

GameTek
800-426-3835

Platform: DOS CD, 300
Requires: 386SX/33, 560KB RAM,
VESA-compatible, VGA
List Price: \$79.99

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★

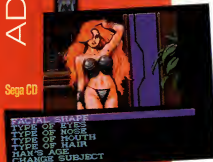
VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

Hell is a role-playing/graphics adventure hybrid that's visually uneven but strong on game play.

Snatcher

By Wes Nihei

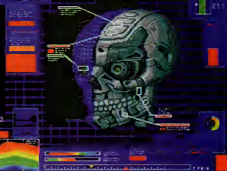
Sega CD



Snatcher's graphics can get graphic.



Special Ghast: One of the bodies in snatcher is "homeworking." The other three are a little more than challenges.



If you like whodunits, Snatcher's a lengthy mystery worth solving.

Snatcher is the English-language port of a

Japanese game by Konami that achieved a degree of cult status a few years ago in Japan, in part because of its gore factor. Of course, a few maggot-infested corpses, disemboweled dogs, and decapitated bodies seem fairly tame by today's gaming standards.

Snatcher's cyberpunk storyline reads something like *The Terminator* meets *Spenser: For Hire*. You play a sensitive P.I. in a world gone bad. Society is gradually recovering from the accidental release of a biological weapon that destroyed 80 percent of the world's population. Things were bad, but they got worse when the Snatchers arrived on the planet. The cybernetic alien invaders, dressed in human-skin suits, are assassinating key members of society and taking their places—for sinister purposes. As Gillian Seed, a government agent who's been reassigned as a Junker (sort of a Snatcher-catcher), your assignment is to eradicate the Snatcher menace. But just who's a Snatcher and who isn't? Therein lies the mystery at the core of this smart-looking, lengthy, graphical adventure game.

Snatcher presents a compelling quest for Sega CD owners, but even though you travel to a multitude of locations in Neo Kobe City, Japan, the game play is strictly linear. If you have the patience, however, solving the Snatcher enigma will burn more than a few brain cells, and you'll eradicate a fair share of Snatchers before you're done, too.

As with any graphical adventure, you gather most of your info and clues by interrogating other characters. The simple interface flashes a command menu on screen, which includes such actions as Look, Move, and Investigate; you then select the appropriate action. Characters communicate with you via on-screen text or audio responses. Snatcher's interface is a breeze to master, but you'll tire of continually cycling and recycling through the command menus.

Of course, there are plenty of diversions in

Nobody knows who or what Snatchers really are.

your path. Some are meant to challenge your sleuthing skills; others...well, they're just there as unnecessarily long distractions. For example, in one of the ongoing subplots, you and your ex-wife have mysteriously lost your memories. She unwittingly holds key information about Snatchers, so you must interrogate her. During your query, you have the option to employ your sensitive nature to try to rekindle the romance.

The often-involved search is broken up by sections in which you shoot first and ask questions later. The game contains a simplistic arcade combat system, which utilizes an onscreen crosshair and a single fire button. Snatchers launch surprise attacks either individually or in squads, but they always appear at one of the eight directional pad points.

The game play may be basic, but the cyberpunk story is great. Superb—if mostly static—visuals push the storyline along. You'll see a tantalizing variety of Japanese anime-style graphics, which draw you into the Snatcher story. If you have a Sega CD and a mind for detective stories, Snatcher's worth your while.

The game's interface lets you solve a variety of intriguing dilemmas.



Doorman: "Snatcher? All right, you win. I've had enough fun for now. I just wanted to play with you for a bit. Now work, Gillian. You're a first-rate Junker. Go on in."

Along the way, you interact with many unusual characters.

Use the Look command often to examine and reexamine everything possible whenever you reach a new area. Using Look affects what you can accomplish with the Investigate, Move, and Use commands. Snatchers' heads are vulnerable. When you reach the Oteen neon-sign puzzle in Act 2, remember the Eat Me sign in Alton Plaza. Here's a better hint: You might find one of those in your pocket. Always read Jordan's I.D. files closely. Pay particular attention to Katrina, Napoleon, and Jean.

Snatcher

Konami
900-896-4468

Platform: Sega CD
Requires: Sega CD
List Price: \$50

GAME PLAY:	★ ★ ★
GETTING STARTED:	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
GRAPHICS:	★ ★ ★
SOUND CHECK:	★ ★ ★ ★
VALUE:	★ ★ ★ ★
Snatcher is a classy, lengthy, graphical mystery marred only by simplistic game play.	

Metaltech: Battledrome

By Vox Day

Don't just
stand there—
shoot!

Battledrome is the second game in Dynamix's Metaltech series, a Battletech-like universe of giant, human-piloted robots slugging it out in battles to the death. Unlike Metaltech: EarthSiege's Terminator-like plot and mission-based structure, Battledrome plays more like a futuristic version of Coliseum crossbred with a tennis-club challenge ladder.

You start off this one- or two-player game, which can be played across a network or via modem, with 200,000 credits (the low spot on the totem pole) and an electronic catalog of Hercs—Metaltech's multistory armored robots. After purchasing and customizing your Herc, you enter the arena and fight other

pilots, either for practice or for cash. It's advisable to begin in practice mode, of course, although you're not able to earn a purse or place a bet with your opponent this way. Still, since you're liable to get smoked rather quickly the first few times, this is the best option for beginners. Repairs do cost money, after all.

Once you've got the hang of the Herc's controls, you can begin working your way up the ten-tier challenge ladder. You're allowed to challenge only pilots within your current tier, so climbing to the top can take a while. Combat takes place in an arena. You and your opponent can agree on a number of options for different arena sizes, obstacles, and legal weapons. As you move up the ladder, the purses, bets, and Herc options all increase, as do the skills of the rival Herc pilots. The goal, of course, is to fight your way to the top of the ladder.

As you might expect from a game designed for multi-machine play, the graphics are much plainer in Battledrome than in other Mech games. This is understandable, since it keeps things from running too slowly on less-powerful computers,

but it is still disappointing when compared to good-looking new releases like Heretic and Wing Commander III. Despite the lack of textured backgrounds, the graphics are attractive; the Hercs have a colorful, slightly cartoonish appearance that suits the arcade feel of the game well. It might have been nice if the adjustable detail settings included a mode that took advantage of high-powered Pentiums, perhaps with textured backgrounds. But if the graphics aren't exactly state-of-the-art, at least the sound effects provide ear candy as good as any other PC game.

It's exciting that Battledrome was designed for multiple-machine play, but the game doesn't live up to its promise. Only two people can play at a time, and remote players can't compete on a local challenge ladder. Considering that Doom offered four-way netplay more than a year ago, this is substandard for a game that's supposedly network-oriented. The limitations of the arena setting combined with the sameness of the Herculean dueling also indicate that this game isn't likely to offer long-lasting play value. Battledrome is a solid concept, but it simply isn't complete.

Metaltech: Battledrome

Dynamix
800-757-7707

Platform: DOS
Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0,
memory manager, joystick, sound card
List Price: \$49.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★

Don't bother playing this game by yourself, but it starts to get interesting when you go Herc vs. Herc with a friend.



Careful negotiating could give you the edge.

Select your Herc and get ready to rumble!



• Like any Mech game, shoot for the legs. They're less well armored and more vulnerable than the torso.

• Even on the easiest levels, it's a mistake to stand still and attempt to slug it out toe-to-toe. Unless you're a sharpshooter, you're going to lose very quickly. • Circling your opponent on a dead run while sniping at his legs can be an extremely effective style. But if you play this way, make sure you don't agree to lots of arena obstacles in the pre-match bargaining. • Arm your Herc with lasers and machine guns instead of missiles. The faster-firing weapons are much more useful in the highly effective run-and-shoot attack.

Central Intelligence

By Barry Brenesal



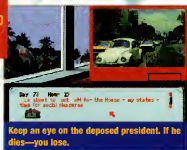
dozens of mission types available.

Unfortunately, your ticket to Sao Madrigal

grants access only to the nation's problems, not its atmosphere. Instead of vibrant local color, the game's visuals mix poorly photographed Latin American backgrounds with bland 256-color graphics screens. A setting like Sao Madrigal would seem to cry out for regional music, but Central Intelligence offers only brief sound effects.

The game isn't easy to learn, either. Central Intelligence sports 37 icons in different groups, and there's no online help. The instruction manual is good, but far too long to act as a quick reference. The two-page icon description booklet is a useless black-and-white jumble.

Too bad. With online help, a better interface, decent artwork, and some music, this strategy



Perform well, and U.S. oil prices will be safe once again.

Position political operatives at once in Sao Madrigal's major population centers. You need them to locate, steal, and distribute money, weapons, and supplies. Purloin printing machines and give them to students. It's important to start fighting the propaganda war right away. It's dangerous, but you must maintain periodic contact with the imprisoned president. Only he can coordinate activities among Sao Madrigal's disparate rebel forces.

There's something rotten in the oil-rich banana republic of Sao Madrigal, and it isn't the bananas. The democratically elected president is under house arrest. A military dictator has grabbed power and galvanized public opinion with scathing attacks on the United States. What to do? The answer is the name of the game: Central Intelligence.

As head of the CIA, you command three groups of nine covert agents in an attempt to destabilize the dictatorship and return the elected president to office. Your political agents can spy, bribe, and blackmail. You can have propagandists acquire and disseminate information for selective character

assassination. Your military advisors can supply arms and training to loyalist rebels hiding in the jungle. But don't let the advisors' presence give you the wrong idea: Central Intelligence is about strategy, not military tactics. You're not in charge of the individual missions; those are all performed automatically.

The game's activities take place in real time, and that includes the actions of the military dictatorship, which brutally crushes any hint of revolt. Government spies are everywhere, and people arrested by the secret police for questioning simply disappear. Periodic "accidents" threaten the deposed president's life—and if he dies, you lose. But if you can get enough of Sao Madrigal's people angry at the current regime, they'll rise up, restore democracy, and see to it that oil prices stay low back in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave.

Central Intelligence has an enjoyable open-ended quality. With more than 1,300 potential contacts from all walks of life, you'll never have to worry about your field operatives lounging around. There are lots of cities, towns, and hamlets to scour for information, thousands of objects to use, and



The game's icon-based interface is confusing at best.

game could have been another SimCity or Civilization. Still, once you get past the steep learning curve, Central Intelligence is fun and addictive. Just turn off the game's sound, jam a salsa tape in your cassette player, and let 'er rip.

Central Intelligence

Ocean of America
408-289-1411

Platform: DOS CD

Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, VGA, mouse

List Price: \$59.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★

This real-time strategy-based game is hurt by poor graphics and a Byzantine interface.

Gazillionaire

By Barry Brenesal

These are spaceships? Yep, in the Galaxy of Gog they are.

Gazillionaire Inc.

Click on the images below to learn more about each type of ship.



How would you like to be the richest person in the universe? Okay, I exaggerate. How would you like to be a respected and successful merchant in the Galaxy of Gog?

You would? Then welcome to Gazillionaire, where you can make your dream come true. You (and up to five other humanoid players) compete against six computer-driven opponents. The first one to earn a preset number of Kubars wins.

Getting rich isn't foolproof, though. There's a lot to manage in Gazillionaire. You have to keep an eye on labor, advertising, and insurance costs. Track news and weather bulletins to get a jump on your competitors. Haggle with creditors and petition for lower tariffs. Buy larger and faster spaceships. Analyze current trends, set passenger prices, and seek out the best markets for your cargo. Bid for Imperial concessions on seven planets, so you can hit your rivals with fat landing fees.

That may sound complex, but it isn't. Gazillionaire comes with an excellent online tutorial that presents only a few features at the start. It adds another feature every couple of turns, until you're completely up-to-date. The menu system is absolutely transparent, and there's detailed help available from all screens.

Although you can't customize your computerized opponents' individual personalities, you can control how savvy they get. This is one game where higher levels of difficulty don't mean extra advantages to the opposition, just better artificial intelligence. When you can compete more-or-less successfully at the highest setting, you're more-or-less ready to lead a megacorporation in real life. Go ahead, put it on your résumé.

By general consensus, most economic simulations are only slightly more entertaining than a broken hip, but Gazillionaire breaks the rules. Humor helps: The planetary histories are witty, and the choice of trade items (e.g., lava lamps and jelly beans) implies a less-than-totally-serious view

of universal economic realities. The Super VGA graphics are also amusing, although the "funny" sound effects are awful. (You know the kind: Buy hair tonic, and you get a squirt noise.) Fortunately, you can turn off the sound when it gets annoying.

If Gazillionaire has a drawback, it's lack of ambition. There are only seven planets to visit and trade with—why not 15, or 30? Why not 30 planets randomly drawn from a database of 150, each with its own ridiculous history and planetary specialty? How about opportunities to corner the market in a commodity or join various guilds that reduce specific costs?

Even without these niceties, though, Gazillionaire is an oddball financial sim that's economically sound (working off time-tested principles of supply and demand) and incurably silly. Win, and you prove your economic machismo; start to lose, and you can always switch to Asteroids.

Gazillionaire

Spectrum HoloByte
800-695-4263

Platform: Win CD

Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, Windows 3.1, Super VGA

Street Price: \$35-\$40

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

An economic simulation that's fun to play, believe it or not.

Win CD



Run your budding empire from the main screen.

It's not as useful to buy cheap goods at low prices as it is to buy expensive goods at moderate prices. You'll make a lot more off each unit. Pay off your loans as quickly as you can. Interest rates can kill you over time. Insurance isn't really necessary if you pay attention to the weather reports and news briefs. The game pauses when you're planetside. Time passes only when you're traveling through space. Choose your starting ship wisely. You'll be able to upgrade cargo capacity and engine speed later, but all other factors remain constant throughout the game. You'll make your biggest killing if you buy Exotics on a planet glutted with them.

Radio Active

By Donald
St. JohnWin CD
Mac CD

It's a motley crew of contestants.

Okay, who started their music career with "Shop Around" and "Mickey's Monkey" in 1961?

That and scads of other potentially vexing questions about pop music are the focus of Radio Active, a Sanctuary Woods game for Windows and Macintosh that may be the first CD-ROM to be a guaranteed hit at parties. The concept is simple: It's that trivia machine at your favorite bar, plunked onto a disc and limited to questions about music from 1961 to 1985.

Radio Active is not the best example of CD-

ROM graphics or presentation, and can be annoyingly slow. You're greeted by video of appropriately oily game-show host Bobby, with occasional audio-only instructions from his annoying Australian-accented sidekick Nigel. After you choose a character from a motley crew of 16 stereotypes, Bobby tells you to click

the green handle. A five-year range comes up on a spinning wheel; you choose an easy, medium, or hard question, and you're off.

Sanctuary Woods didn't push too hard with the basic game video, which is either jerky (the host)—even on a Pentium—or nonexistent (your character). Occasionally, however, instead of getting a range of years, the wheel stops on a reasonably good video clip of a music personage who poses a *What's My Line*-type question. There's also a jigsaw puzzle of musical notes, each with an audio clip; your job is to assemble the pieces in correct running order. And there's a *Name That Tune* game as well. The extra features add some verve and help compensate for the weak graphics.

The heart of Radio Active is the more than 1,000 queries themselves. Each question has 16 possible answers; simply click on the record icon corresponding to your choice. (Do it fast

Pull the song pieces into the right order, and you'll score big points.

enough, and you get bonus points.) Correct answers earn a factoid about the song and an audio excerpt. You can also click on a knob that yields songwriting and publishing credits. The developers opted not to license real versions of the more than 200 songs, instead using session pros to create cover versions that are frequently dead ringers for the originals.

Your knowledge of music ultimately determines Radio Active's level of difficulty. Casual fans will find the game challenging, but music hardcores will rack up the points—even at the hard level. It doesn't help that Radio Active fails to take advantage of its multiple-choice format. For instance, identifying the three original members of the quartet Talking Heads would be trickier if the fourth member was one of the choices.

Still, Radio Active—which was originally titled *What's That Song* (see July 1994, page 10)—is good clean party fun. And by the way, it was the Miracles, Smokey Robinson's band, who charted with "Shop Around" and "Mickey's Monkey." Now you can sleep tonight.

Radio Active

Sanctuary Woods
415-286-6110

Platform: Win CD/Mac CD
Requires: 386/33, 8MB RAM, Windows 3.1, double-speed CD-ROM drive, Sound Blaster-compatible sound card
List Price: \$24.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★

Radio Active is a blast for casual music fans and party gamers, but a snooze for tunes aficionados.

5
4
3
2
1

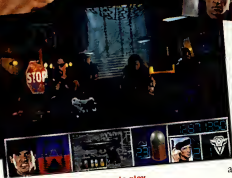
● Time matters. If you know the answer early, ignore the rest of the question and concentrate on clicking the name as soon as possible. ● Names are in alphabetical order. ● Play "hard" whenever possible; the question values are higher, and so are the bonuses. ● The puzzle is a lot easier after you get the first segment in place. ● Not for rockers only; it helps to know about people like Connie Francis and Brenda Lee. ● Tired of listening to the unctuous host and his smarmy sidekick? Prempt them by clicking anywhere; that'll start the question right away.

300

Demolition Man

By Peter Olafson

Spartan gets to duke it out with Phoenix all over again.



Kill 'em all. It's the only way to play.



Stallone's on the mark, but the game misfires.



TIPS

● In the shoot-'em-up sequence in the museum, shoot the fuse box in the pedestal repeatedly to short it out, then go after the light fixture. ● In the beat-'em-up sequences, try to stay out of reach and take down Phoenix with kicks and then uppercuts. ● Just keep the pedal to the metal, and an eye out for fuel, in the driving bit. ● Don't waste your time on Phoenix in the 3-D movement sections. He's only there to wear you down.

Sylvester Stallone is the best thing about Virgin's *Demolition Man*. The heavily muscled actor who planted "Yo!" in the national vocabulary brings his chiseled mug and dour humor to this otherwise mediocre sci-fi action/adventure for 3DO.

Based on the 1993 flick of the same name, *Demolition Man* features Stallone all over the place, flexing his muscles and aiming his pistol in cut scenes, as well as offering unsolicited commentary on your pre-game options and in-game progress. Choose the "easy" mode, and the husky hunk appears in high-quality, full-motion video to dismiss your selection with a matter-of-fact, "You suck!"

What doesn't suck is Stallone himself as John Spartan, a 20th-century cop revived from a cryogenic sleep to nail resurrected supercriminal Simon Phoenix (played by Wesley Snipes) a second time. The concept of a real star in a licensed game is a good one. It's even a legit reason in itself to produce such a game. Better still, the implementation here is far superior to the usual video-game animated caricatures or the alleged look-alikes featured in Panasonic's *Jurassic Park*. If you're a fan of Stallone, you're going to have some fun with *Demolition Man*.

On the other hand, there's definitely a vacuum at work here. Fans of action games are pretty much out of luck. Like *Jurassic Park*, *Demolition Man* consists of four recurring "subgames"—linked here by scenes from the movie and footage shot specifically for the game. The shooting-gallery sequences have you gunning for bad guys who pop up from behind various obstacles. A side-

scrolling beat-'em-up puts you in a knuckle-to-knuckle faceoff with Phoenix. There's also a driving game and a Doom-style 3-D jaunt.

Unfortunately, most of the creativity seems to have been expended on *Demolition Man*'s overall concept rather than on the various subgames themselves. Of the four sequences, only the shooting gallery shows any true inspiration. The bad guys go down in delightfully goofy ways, and in later stages you have to fend off incoming fire while sorting out several tricks or gimmicks, such as shooting the proper target, that allow you to progress.

The other subgames lack the crowning touches needed to turn them into full-fledged games. The beat-'em-up is distinguished only by high-resolution graphics; it offers nothing else you haven't seen in dozens of other games. The driving game is an embarrassment—all you have to do is floor it and dodge traffic. And the first-person 3-D action has none of the intoxicating, stop-and-go rhythm of good Doom-style games. All you do is find the exit. The bad guys seem to go down even if you miss wildly, and Phoenix rants and rages but doesn't go down at all.

In short, the only reliable presence in *Demolition Man* is Stallone himself. While that's something, it's simply not enough.

Demolition Man

Virgin Interactive Entertainment
800-874-4607

Platform: 3DO
Requires: 3DO Multiplayer
List Price: \$69.99

GAME PLAY: ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★

Stallone's great. The game's not.

Off-world Interceptor

By Peter Olafson

Off-world Interceptor is a new 3DO shoot-'em-up that really takes things apart—in more ways than one.

First, there's the literal way. Crystal Dynamics' clever drive-and-shoot game lets you reduce the denizens of its five hilly worlds to white-hot fireballs. In fact, your survival pretty much requires such acts of aggression. You're at the wheel of an off-road vehicle—a variation on the sort of big-wheeled pickup usually associated with *Monster Truck Night*—supplied with lasers, missiles, jumpers that put spring in your step, and nitros for extra bursts of speed.

And there are more toys where those came from, in the form of power-ups strewn across the peaks and valleys you traverse en route to a distant finish line. But don't sweat the rough terrain; that's the least of your worries. It's a regular Molotov cocktail party out on the course. The landscape is well-appointed with gun positions, mines, spikes, and other big-wheeled vehicles driven with malicious intent. And there are bosses—very big and bad bosses. If that's not enough, the Battle option lets you take on a friend in split-screen action.

Second, there's the more figurative way to take things apart. Crystal Dynamics has shrewdly returned to the world originally created for its earlier—and superb—*Total Eclipse* fly-and-shoot 3DO game. Off-world Interceptor uses the same game "engine" to let you explore *Total Eclipse*'s elaborate backdrop in greater detail. Instead of rushing inexorably forward, you can stop (at your peril!), look around, and explore within a 140-degree field of view. Half the fun is blowing stuff up; the other half is finding more stuff that will help you blow stuff up.

And that's not the end of Interceptor's deconstruction of interactive game clichés. Off-world Interceptor opens with one of those overdone full-motion-video story sequences that seem to infect every new game these days. The difference here is that the developers make fun of it with a *Mystery Science Theater 3000*-style commen-

As if things weren't bad enough, now you've got a boss to destroy.



The opening video sequence gets lambasted by a couple of wide-cracking silhouettes.



It's kill or be killed on Off-world Interceptor's five worlds.

TIPS



• Don't charge straight across the landscape when under fire; the aim of the fixed-gun positions can be deadly. Adopt a serpentine course, and use the terrain for protection. • If you've taken heavy damage, don't go hill-climbing. You may not make it to the top, and that could strand you in a dangerous spot.

• Don't waste supplies in the early levels. You don't need them there, but you will later on. • It sometimes pays to take a slower, more circuitous route through a level. You'll blow your time bonus, but you may find well-hidden power-ups. • Don't try to sneak through minefields. You should blow them up with your lasers instead.



The split-screen Battle mode lets you take on a human opponent.

tary provided by a pair of silhouetted jokesters in the foreground.

It's all plenty of fun, but the game isn't perfect. Interceptor lacks some of its predecessor's range. In *Total Eclipse*, just when you started to tire of weaving around the hills and through the valleys, the game dropped you into a narrow tunnel resembling the Death Star trench sequence in *Star Wars*. There's nothing comparable here; you just continue to drive and shoot over the same type of landscapes. But don't let that discourage you. For a game so dedicated to taking things apart, Off-world Interceptor is put together pretty well.

Off-world Interceptor

Crystal Dynamics
415-473-3434

Platform: 3DO
Requires: 300 Multiplayer
List Price: \$59.99

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

Off-world Interceptor revisits *Total Eclipse*'s world, but doesn't deliver quite as much variety as the original.

Cyberwar

By Peter Olafson

DOS CD



The consoles let you choose various games.



Select your challenge and get ready to play.

When piloting one of the vehicles, memorize the course. When you finish one joystick movement, immediately switch to the next so you're prepared when the turn comes up. • The random cat-walk sequences toward the end of the game require you to pay close attention to timing. • When working on the tanglegram puzzles at some security doors, look for a distinctive, one-of-a-kind piece to identify the proper design. • Don't dawdle in the Debugging Area. The watch-bee isn't far behind you.

Get the angle right, or you'll visit Cyberjoke.

Cyberwar is basically The Lawnmower Man game, boosted to 256 colors. This mammoth action title fails to surmount its predecessor's game-play limitations, but it does up the technical ante while correcting some obvious mistakes in the original. It's not bad—but it's not especially good, either.

At first glance, you won't notice a big difference. You still play Dr. Angelo—the Pierce Brosnan role from *The Lawnmower Man* movie—but these days you're looking rather less like the next James Bond and more like a rogue hood ornament. I'll spare you the details of the silly story, but it takes the doc on a trip to the VSI North complex to defeat a soulless clone of Cyberjoke, the virtual villain from The Lawnmower Man.

This does not mean simply throwing a rock at a window or something. VSI North is one big three-CD deathtrap, and exploring it means playing lots of subgames. Yes, subgames: the developer's friend, those bits of arcade, puzzle, and maze so loved by designers of movie-related computer games.

Ideally, subgames should spin off a central, free-flowing game, as they do in Philips' exemplary *Litil Divil*. That might have made Cyberwar really killer, and more its own creature. Instead, the role of plot mover has been handed over to 3-D linking animations. These gorgeous, near-full-screen sequences lead into each of the subgames, and they give Cyberwar a sense of movement. Even the elaborate death animation (which you'll get to watch many times) leaves the impression that you're going somewhere.

However, the linking sequences are about as interactive as *Matlock*, and the subgames aren't much better. They include scooting through mazes; blasting away in a 3-D version of the classic artillery duel game; piloting various craft through narrow places and around tight curves; and solving an assortment of graphical locked-door puzzles. Some are better than others—but the maze bits are pleasantly tough—but the games too

often fall prey to the Dragon's Lair just-one-push mentality. You're not really flying the craft, just telling it where to go in a pinch. You're aiming not for the other artillery platform, but for a hole in an invisible shield between the two. As with *The Lawnmower Man*, the game play tends to be simple.

On the plus side, there is some variety: The consoles that mark your path through VSI let you choose among three subgames at each juncture—and a given console may not always roll the same three. The consoles also let you save and restore three games or check out the map.

Also, the game does look and sound nice. There are a couple of noticeable slowdowns in the cut-scene animations, particularly in the Monty Hall routine in Mutation Storage. But since you can jump past most of the cut scenes by tapping the space bar, don't lose any sleep over the performance quirks. At that, don't lose any zzzz's in general over Cyberwar.

Cyberwar

Sales Curve Interactive
310-577-1518

Platform: DOS CD

Requires: 486SX/33, 4MB RAM, VGA, sound card, double-speed CD-ROM drive

List Price: \$79.99

GAME PLAY: ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★

Cyberwar: Meet The Lawnmower Man—after a colorful makeover.



It looks good, but plays so-so.

Gamer's Choice Edition

By Damon Dean

The great thing about shareware is that it's free, relatively speaking. But finding good shareware and downloading it for a reasonable price can be frustrating. Wouldn't it be great if you could get to the gems



Zippy bites the dust in Llamatron:2112.



Shareware role playing gets a boost with Mystic Towers.



Take an action-packed ride in Raptor.

back. However, a few will appeal to more modern tastes. Raptor: Call Of The Shadows puts you in the cockpit of a futuristic jet fighter, where you take on wave after wave of enemy fighters. And, Llamatron:2112 is certainly the funniest entry. Llamatron is a knock-off of the

old arcade game Berzerk, except, of course, that you're a Llama. The game's premise is simple: Shoot anything that moves and rescue other critters to score bonus points.

Mystic Towers, the most interesting of the role-playing offerings, and Argo Checkers, a way-cool 3-D version of the classic board game, are also worth checking out.

For about \$25, the Gamer's Choice Edition offers a modest number of games, some of which are actually worth playing. Be warned, though: The disc's interface is boring text, and the game installations are not without their quirks. Otherwise, the Gamer's Choice Edition is a good shareware sampler that you'll find yourself picking up when you don't know what kind of gaming mood you're in.

without having to sift through hundreds of rocks?

Well, the Gamer's Choice Edition shareware collection lets you do just that. The 25 games that the folks at Fun 'N' Games have put together on a CD-ROM may not all be flawless, but many are high-quality challenges. Just stick the disc in your computer for instant access to top shareware.

The collection has a strong mix of arcade-style, role-playing, and first-person-perspective games, as well as flight sims. The production values on the majority of games is quite high, and all but a half-dozen can be run directly from the CD-ROM without installing any files on your hard drive.

You'll find the classic shareware hits Wolfenstein-3D and Blake Stone, which also happen to be the most challenging games on the disc. Both first-person shooters drop you right in the middle of the action: Wolfenstein has you escaping a World War II German gulag, while Blake Stone moves things to the future and has you invading a space station.

Most of the disc's arcade-style games will remind you of those you used to play on your old Atari 2600, if you can remember that far

Gamer's Choice Edition

Fun 'N' Games
800-756-7521

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386/33, 4MB RAM, VGA,
Sound Blaster-compatible sound card
Street Price: \$25

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★

They aren't all classics, but Gamer's Choice provides plenty of bang for the shareware buck.

Live Action Football

By Andrew Miller

Give me cartoon characters or give me death.

OK, so maybe Patrick Henry's version was more meaningful, but I'm serious. The latest trend in CD-ROM sports games is to use video footage of real-life players instead of animated characters. This seems like a novel idea at first, and it certainly looks good on a computer screen. But there's a major shortcoming with this new approach—lack of variety.

Accolade's Live Action Football is the best game in the video-style sports genre, but that isn't saying a whole lot. And don't get the name Live Action Football confused with a real "you're in the action" sports simulation. It isn't: You only get to watch from the sidelines. If you enjoy strategy sports games in which you play the coach or manager, then you'll love Live Action Football. But if you like to call the plays and then take over once the action starts, this game will get old in a hurry.

Live Action Football is the first title to incorporate original video footage into an interactive football game. Unlike other PC football games that use stock footage, Live Action Football's video clips were shot by Accolade on location at the Florida Citrus Bowl using the Orlando Predators, an Arena Football League team.

It sounds intriguing, but after playing Live Action Football a few times, you'll find that there isn't much difference from one game to the next. You can only pick from 20 offensive and 12 defensive plays. And even though Accolade taped more than 600 play outcomes, you still occasionally see the same clip twice. During one game, for example, I witnessed the same outcome three times.

You're also limited to a pair of teams made up of faux NFC and AFC all-stars. Since the game has been officially licensed by the NFL Players' Association, you get the names of the league's top players, such as Steve Young, Troy Aikman, Barry Sanders—even Deion Sanders. Of course, the guys you see onscreen are actually Arena Leaguers acting like the real thing.

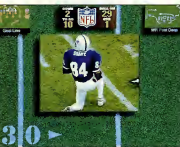
Live Action Football looks good, but it gets repetitive.

Win CD

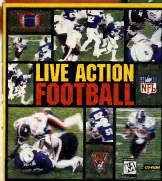


TIPS

- Don't always use the same play in the same situations. The computer can detect patterns in your play-calling and will adjust its responses accordingly.
- When on defense, call for a run-blitz on first down, especially when you're playing against a "conservative coach."
- If you coach the NFC team, don't shy away from using the fullback. In most offensive formations, he's Emmitt Smith.
- Don't use the safety blitz on defense during passing downs. You're almost sure to get beat by a tight end or running back deep.



You pick the play and watch the action unfold via video clips.



Live Action Football uses video footage instead of animated players.

Players from the Orlando Predators of the Arena Football League portray your favorite NFL stars.

You can play Live Action Football against the computer, or tackle a human opponent. The game is most fun against another person, when emotion and unpredictability keep things interesting.

Against the computer, though, you must select exactly what kind of coach you want to face—aggressive or conservative.

It's not all bad. The play-by-play commentary by Al Michaels and Pat Haden is splendid; it's really like watching an actual game. On the other hand, a couple glitches draw a penalty flag. Even if you have a 486/66 with 8MB RAM, the video clips are quite choppy. And video loads too slowly after you select a play. This is especially true on punts, where you'll often start seeing the play after it is more than half over.

Still, if coaching and strategy—not simulation—are your major concerns for a football game, then get Live Action Football. There's not a better video-based football game on the market.

Live Action Football

Accolade
800-245-7744

Platform: Win CD
Requires: 386SX, 8MB RAM, Windows 3.1, Super VGA, Windows-compatible sound card
List Price: \$69.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★

Live Action Football is video football at its best. But if you're looking for an action-oriented simulation, look elsewhere.

Hardball 4

By Andrew Miller

By the time you read this, the Major League Baseball Players may still be out on strike, but that doesn't mean you have to go without big-league action this season. Accolade's Hardball 4 has everything a fan could want, and then some.

Unlike the movies—where consecutive sequels usually go from bad to worse—Hardball has only gotten better with age, and is by far the best game in the Accolade series. It's also one of the top baseball simulations available for any game system, with its tremendous graphics, exciting game play, superior play-by-play commentary, and challenging computerized opponents.

Hardball 4's graphics are highly realistic. From the pitcher's wind-up to the batter's swing, Accolade has hit a grand slam with its authentic animations. But it's not just the players: The 28 realistically rendered ballparks look great and offer different field and wind conditions. Thus, when you play a game in Chicago or Boston, for example, you'll feel like you're swinging for the fences at Wrigley Field and Fenway Park, not some generic location.

One or two players can control individual players on the field or assume the role of team manager and just watch the action. (The boring choice, if you ask me.) And Hardball's modem support means that your challenger can be down the street or in the next state. You pick from one of the 28 Major League teams or generate a team of your own with the players you want. You can even trade players or, if you really don't like the whole team, sell it to the highest bidder.

Your team can compete in a single exhibition game, on up to a complete 162-game season, which includes an All-Star game, playoffs, and the championship series. And since Hardball 4 follows the Major League's new three-division realignments, it's easier than ever to make the playoffs. But be ready to invest some time no matter which type of game you choose, since an average nine-inning game takes about an hour. If your slugging's in a slump or your pitching's getting pounded, try out the training mode; it's a great way to sharpen your skills.

The standard edition of Hardball 4 does not fea-

ture real-life Major League players; instead, it uses generic "replacement players." If you want the real thing, you'll have to buy the Hardball 4 MLBPA Players Disk. It costs an extra \$25, but it's worth the price of admission. The MLBPA disk gives you digitized color photos of all 700 Major League players and their stats based on the strike-shortened 1994 season. The CD-ROM version of Hardball 4, scheduled to be out soon, will include the MLBPA information.

Award-winning ABC commentator Al Michaels does the play-by-play in Hardball 4. If you have the MLBPA disk, Michaels announces the names of each player; if not, he identifies them by their position.

If you want fantastic graphics and authentic baseball action, then look no further. Hardball 4 is without a doubt the most realistic baseball simulation you can buy.

If your team is in the cellar, you can sell it.



Hardball 4 scores a homerun.

TIPS

- If you have two fast runners on first and third, steal second. Once the catcher makes the throw to second, send your third-base runner home. He should score easily.
- When you have a man on first, press Hit and Run or Steal. The computer always sends the second baseman to cover second, so try and hit into the hole between first and second base for an easy base hit.
- If you're trying to score a runner from second base after hitting the ball into the outfield, run your batter midway between first and second base. The computer's second baseman will hold the ball to try and tag him, and your lead runner will score easily. Just don't move the batter too far toward second, or he'll get caught in a rundown.



Hardball 4 has the most striking field and player graphics in the league.

Hardball 4

Accolade
800-245-7744

Platform: DOS, DOS CD
Requires: 386SX/33, 4MB RAM, Super VGA, sound board
List Price: \$59.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★ ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★ ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★ ★

Hardball 4 has no competition in the baseball simulation market. It hits a grand slam.



With the MLBPA Players Disk, you can choose from all 700 major leaguers.

Gone Fishing

By John Sauer

There are some big fish hidin' in cyberspace, and you can catch 'em with *Gone Fishin'*, the digital fresh-water fishing simulator from Amtex Software. These piscatorial programmers have taken the Bay of Quinte (say *kwin-tee*) on Lake

Other control icons let you access your tackle box, a fishing map, and your rod and reel. You can customize your trip by picking the time of day or night, the date, and the weather. Unlike the real thing, you can even increase your "luck" if nothing's biting.

The game is packed in a plastic tackle box that comes with a real map of the Bay of Quinte. I poked around the hot spots listed on the map



This old-timer is full of fish stories. You can discover great hot spots if you listen closely.

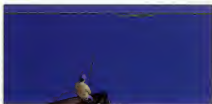


Ontario and re-created it in virtual form so you can land the lunker of your dreams—without having to shell out for a boat.

As a former Florida Keys charter captain, I'm ready to fish anywhere, real or virtual. And *Gone Fishin'* is the best PC fishing sim I've seen, though it's not without some performance problems. Amtek chose to go with good graphics and sounds over speed and ease of use. As a result, if you run the game with full graphics and audio, expect excruciating slowdowns each time you move the boat, even on a fast 486.

Navigating in the fishing map is limited to line of sight, so you can't just click on the dock and go home; instead, you have to continuously click your way around obstacles to get to the dock. And *Gone Fishin'* mimics the sport's slow periods as well as the hot bites—in something close to real time. So a full day of digital fishing will leave you almost as tired as if you'd spent it on the water.

The first in a planned series of virtual fishing titles, *Gone Fishin'* obviously reflects many hours of research, from the Bay to the tackle shop to the crusty, tall-tale-tellin' old-timer in the fishing lodge. Amtex even brought aboard pro fisherman Bill Saiff as a resident expert. (Armchair anglers will know Bill from his PBS *Rod & Reel* fishing show.) Just click on his icon for text-based advice on the fish that live in the Bay. The



and caught some record walleye. Then I hooked a monster that completely stripped my reel and left me empty-handed! (Yeah, I know, "You should have seen the one that got away.") The fishing articles you find in the lodge—such as the one about the toy poodle that gets inhaled like a gumdrop—indicate that there are some very large fish hanging out in the Bay.

Serious (read: patient) anglers who don't mind some slow spots in their virtual fishing should definitely grab their favorite poles and head out to the digital Bay. Amtex even plans to sponsor virtual fishing tournaments. Oh, one more thing: If you land a real big one with a minnow hook in its mouth, please e-mail me the hook—it's mine.

Gone Fishin'

Amtex Software
613-967-7900

Platform: DOS CD
Requires: 386DX/33, 4MB RAM, DOS 5.0, Super VGA, mouse
List Price: \$49.95

GAME PLAY: ★ ★

GETTING STARTED: ★ ★

GRAPHICS: ★ ★ ★

SOUND CHECK: ★ ★ ★

VALUE: ★ ★ ★

It's the most realistic fishing sim available, but performance hiccups will leave many anglers twiddling their thumbs.



ECSTATIC

You'll have nightmares playing this game! Never before has such realistic gameplay been combined with such maddening adventure. Screams abound when a young girl's nightmares terrorize a town gone mad. Suddenly you're caught up in a role-playing horror story that features ellipsoid 3-D technology for the ultimate in realism. Over 200 beautifully animated sequences, incredibly detailed 3-D backgrounds and a broad mixture of action and horror make this game a unique, cinematic experience.

Available at



For PC and CD ROM

THE ULTIMATE NIGHTMARE

17

Voluntarily Rated for Mature Audiences
This title contains subject matter which may
not be appropriate for audiences under 17

AM
Andrew
Spencer
game

TECHNOLOGIA

675 Massachusetts Avenue • Cambridge, MA 02139 • Phone (617) 497-7794 Fax (617) 497-6750
This game was developed by Andrew Spencer. Animation by Alain Maimdron.

By Ann M. Marcus

The Best Baud For the Buck

Now's the ideal time to buy a new modem for your computer. Fast 14.4 Kilobit per second (Kbps) data/fax modems have never been cheaper. That's because the arrival of even faster 28.8 Kbps V.34 modems—modems that can transmit data at up to 28.8 Kbps—has pushed down prices on what used to be top-of-the-line units.

These days you can find 14.4 Kbps models for about \$100 on the street—less than half the price they were selling for when *Electronic Entertainment* last reviewed 14.4 Kbps modems just 10 months ago (see "Calling All Modems," June 1994, page 108) and about half the price of the 28.8 Kbps models.

While 14.4 Kbps fax modems are no longer the cutting edge of communications technology, they're still plenty fast enough to let you do just about everything you want to do with a modem: send and receive e-mail and faxes, chat online, download files from a BBS or online service, and play online games. And unless you plan to download or upload huge gigabyte-sized files, or spend every waking hour browsing Internet's graphics-intensive World Wide Web, you'll save money and still have what you need to hook up and hang out. In fact, most brand-new computers now ship with 14.4 Kbps data/fax modems inside. Best of all, you save about \$100 compared to a 28.8 Kbps model that won't yet work at its highest speed with many commercial online services.

We kicked the tires on five external 14.4 Kbps Hayes-compatible data/fax modems that support data compression and error control (V.42bis). They're also available in internal models for even less money—but require a trip inside of the computer to install. An external modem lets you simply plug a cable into the serial port on the back of your computer, assuming you have the required modem cable. Check to make sure whether the modem you plan to buy includes a cable or if you'll have to pick one up at the computer store for about \$8. You'll also need to check whether your computer has a 9- or a 25-pin serial port.

All of the modems also come bundled with com-

munications and fax programs and free trial accounts on such online services as America Online, CompuServe, Delphi, and Prodigy. Generally, the bundled communications programs are pretty basic packages, but a few modems come with "lite" versions of name-brand programs like Delima's WinFax Pro.

All of the modems had no problems connecting to CompuServe or sending a fax via WinFax Pro. They differed in such areas as ease of setup, what features they included, and how good their manuals were.

You won't go wrong with any of these reasonably priced modems, but the SupraFAXModem scores at the top of our list. While it hardly cuts the sleekest profile, it comes complete with a 25- to 9-pin adaptable serial cable, bundles top-quality software, and is among the lowest-priced modems out there. We've listed the modems below in order of how they measured up.

SupraFAXModem 144LC

The SupraFAXModem 144 LC tops our list of 14.4 Kbps modems. It's the only one that includes a serial cable and even provides a 25- to 9-pin adapter. Supra is also the only company that offers toll-free technical support for its modem. The Supra's Silent Answer feature allows the modem to quietly detect whether it is receiving a fax or phone call—so human callers aren't scared off by an ear-piercing screech. The Supra comes with COM-It data communications software and WinFax Lite, a scaled-down version of one of the best and easiest-to-use fax software products on the market. You'll also get trial subscriptions to GEnie and the Online Air Guide (OAG) flight reservation service, which is an airline reservation service.

Our only peeve: Supra included an audio port on its modem, but plugging anything into it—as the red note in the box warns—can damage the equipment,





the part is included only for "future enhancements."

Supra is also working on a 14.4 Kbps modem that features voice-record and playback capabilities; it will cost about \$40 more than the \$139 price-tag of the 144 LC.

Supra

800-727-8772

List/Street Price: \$139/\$109

Warranty: 5-year

Tech Support: M-F 8am-5pm (PDT)

Hayes Accura 144 + Fax 144

Hayes set the modem standards, and the Accura is a sharp-looking product at a reasonable price. It also has an eye-pleasing streamlined design and even comes in a spiffy pink box.

It's a breeze to set up the Accura, thanks in part to its user-friendly documentation. The Accura includes SmartCom for Windows LE data communications software and SmartCom Fax for Windows.

One warning note: Last year Hayes merged with Practical Peripherals (makers of the MiniTower II modem). At press time, both Hayes and Practical Peripherals were negotiating a Chapter 11 reorganization. There's no telling if the proceedings could affect the Accura's 7-year warranty or Practical Peripherals' lifetime warranty.

Hayes

800-429-3739

List/Street Price: \$139.99/\$129.99

Warranty: 2-year

Tech Support: M-F 8am-6pm (EDT)

Practical Peripherals MiniTower II

A flat, lighted rectangle, the Practical Peripherals MiniTower II seems misnamed. But the MiniTower includes brackets that let you set the unit on its side, giving you a much smaller footprint to save you some precious desktop space. The

MiniTower II is easy to get up and running despite its rather terse documentation.

Practical Peripherals bundles the Quick Link II data communications and fax software, plus trial subscriptions to CompuServe, GEnie, America Online, and OAG. Finally, the MiniTower II includes outstanding support from Practical Peripherals—a lifetime warranty and technical support 7 days a week.

Practical Peripherals

800-442-4774

List/Street Price: \$139/\$109

Warranty: Lifetime

Tech Support: M-F 8am-11pm; Sat & Sun 8am-5pm (PDT)

U.S. Robotics Sportster 14,400 Data/Fax

We had a bit of trouble setting up the U.S. Robotics Sportster because we couldn't find the labels for its phone jacks. We eventually discovered them—on the bottom of the modem. To its credit, the Sportster is the only modem tested that features a convenient volume dial-control so that you don't have to listen to the modem warble and wail when you're making a connection.

The Sportster includes Quick Link II data communications and fax software for both DOS and Windows, as well as disks and trial offers for the Imagination Network, America Online, Prodigy, GEnie, and CompuServe.

U.S. Robotics

800-342-5877

List/Street Price: \$189/\$119

Warranty: 5-year

Tech Support: M-F 8am-6pm (COT)

Zoom VFX 14.4V

Along with the normal data transmission and fax capabilities common to the five modems, the Zoom VFX 14.4V also lets you record and play back outgoing or incoming telephone messages—turning your modem and computer into an efficient, but expensive, answering machine. The company sells other models of 14.4 Kbps modems with no voice capabilities for significantly less (\$99 to \$150) than the high-priced \$199 Zoom VFX 14.4V we reviewed.

It has an external speaker jack so that you can take advantage of the modem's voice features. The Zoom comes bundled with COM-it data communications software for DOS and Windows, BitFax and Bivox (DOS software for fax and voice), and SuperVoice for Windows. The Zoom models with-out voice capabilities includes a different bundle of software—WinFax Lite, DOSfax, and COM-it. All the Zoom models give you free trial subscriptions to America Online, GEnie, CompuServe, Prodigy, Delphi, and CheckFree (an automated online bill paying service).

Zoom

800-686-6191

List/Street Price: \$199/\$159

Warranty: 7-year

Tech Support: M-F 8:30am-11pm; Sat 9am-5pm (EDT)

Inside Virtual Reality

Definitions of "Virtual Reality" range from a good book that sucks you in to sockethead, direct-to-the-brain-stem, see-hear-touch-and-smell-it visions of the future. But when it comes to computer entertainment, VR generally refers to wearable systems, frequently called "Head Mounted Displays" or HMDs, that provide sight and sound sensations while at least partially excluding distracting external real-world visual and audio stimuli.

While that certainly sounds promising, HMDs aren't exactly a hot commodity with gamers yet, despite the best efforts of the cyber-lifestyle pushers. That's because most VR head-mounted displays are still expensive (in the \$700-plus range) and provide an entertainment experience more akin to Uncle Murray's blurry home movies than *The Lawnmower Man*.

Still, the promise of high-quality, reasonably priced VR will no doubt be realized, though perhaps not until we edge a bit closer to the new millennium. In the meantime, if you've ever wondered what's really going on inside those futuristic helmets, keep on reading. (And if you think you're ready to dive into VR today, take a look at "Heads Up" to see what HMDs are available now.)

Head tracking: Part of what separates the VR experience from simply strapping a monitor to your face (other than the strain on your neck) is head-motion tracking. HMDs use a variety of means to track the position of your head, so that when you look up or to the side,

the view changes appropriately. Some HMDs use mechanical, ultrasound, magnetic, or optical trackers that can detect head position as well as orientation. But most home VR-type HMDs use "inertial" methods to detect when you tilt and swivel your head. When the tracking device notices that you've looked up, for example, it tells the computer to pan upward and show you what's above you—blue sky, imposing stone ceiling, whatever. Unfortunately, most of today's tracking mechanisms have a "latency" (the time between when you move and when the computer reacts) that requires you to move your head unnaturally slowly and smoothly to allow the images to keep up with where you're looking.



HMDs still don't come cheap. The CyberMaxx sets you back about \$700...

Stereo vision: Most home-use HMDs employ a pair of small liquid crystal display (LCD) screens, one in front of each eye. By creating slight differences between the pair of images shown, the headsets fool the brain into perceiving a three-dimensional image. To deliver the best effects, however, 3-D visualization requires specially written software, and most systems need additional hardware in your PC to display it. If the software doesn't support 3-D, you get a standard 2-D image and lose some of the impact.

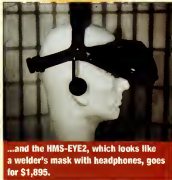
...and the HMS-EYE2, which looks like a welder's mask with headphones, goes for \$1,895.

Making it real: Many game-development techniques used in first-person shoot-'em-ups, such as Doom or Descent, will lead the leap to VR. Depth cues such as shading and object interposition (showing objects in front of and

behind other objects) that create a feeling of distance will work even more effectively in a VR environment. That's partly because HMDs mask external stimuli that could spoil the depth effect. 3-D sound, which makes noises appear to come at you from all directions—even from behind or above you—also helps make virtual worlds more convincing.

Sound: Most HMDs provide some form of stereo earphones for delivering sound. Quality audio greatly enhances the "immersive" experience, which helps account for the popularity of surround sound and other special effects in home theater systems. Several HMD manufacturers support three-dimensional sound either on the HMD or from a 3-D audio sound card. 3-D-audio technology, such as QSound, can make planes appear to fly overhead and footsteps sneak up from behind, creating a more realistic virtual environment. But once again, for best effect, the software must support the sound standard.

Field of view: Field of view describes how much you can see in front of you. Most people have fields of view that cover about 180 degrees, and ideally, an immersive VR system



would re-create this "natural" vision. Unfortunately, most HMDs provide an active field of view of around 60 degrees or less, leaving out much of your peripheral vision. To block out distractions around the edges, many VR systems include blinders of some sort to

help cover up the "missing" field of view, but the effect is often like looking at the world through a pair of ski goggles.

Controllers:

VR isn't just seeing—it's also doing. But standard mice and joysticks were designed for controlling objects in two dimensions, creating the need for VR-specific controllers. VR pioneers have come up with everything from gloves that let you manipulate virtual objects manually to 6DOF (6 Degrees of Freedom) devices that let you control movement and rotational motion in all directions—including roll (rotation), pitch (front-to-back rocking motion), and yaw (panning). Some of these devices use magnetic, optical, or ultrasound sensors to remotely detect the position of the controller in space so that its position and motion can be "projected" into the virtual environment that you view.

Immersive VR:

Immersive VR units attempt to totally surround your vision and hearing (and eventually the senses of touch, taste, and smell) within the virtual environment.



Some HMDs, like the VFX1, seek to totally surround the senses...

see-through systems that are less immersive and don't completely shut you off from the outside world. These systems reportedly help prevent the vertigo and motion sickness that some users can experience in immersive VR environments. Another non-HMD immersive-VR approach surrounds you with several screens and speakers to create the illusion of larger space. Such systems, or "caves," are very pricey—in the range of thousands of dollars—and are much more practical in arcades than in homes, at least until we reach the day when

Opaque visors block out external light, and headphones eliminate outside noise. Such systems can be very involving, but other HMD developers, such as Virtual I/O, offer

everyhouse comes equipped standard with its own Holodeck.

Safety:

Since few people have spent much time wearing HMDs in immersive environments, nobody really knows much about the safety implications of VR. That's not likely to change until VR comes into widespread use. Some headsets require careful adjustment to

prevent excessive eyestrain, and some optometrists have already expressed concern over the effect that staring into LCDs a fraction of an inch away from the eyes could have on vision, particularly for children. Some people report experiencing vertigo and motion sick-



...while the i-glasses! Take a more open approach.

ness when using VR systems (others just consider this part of the fun). And HMD manufacturers are constantly trying to create ever-lighter models to decrease discomfort and reduce strain on neck muscles. Finally, HMDs that block your vision and hearing could make you susceptible to common household hazards such as stairs, furniture, and anything else that goes bump in cyberspace. Still, HMD makers are aware of these issues and are working to resolve the problems.

The future:

Where is VR headed? Who knows? But totally immersive VR may someday be achieved by sending stimuli directly to your nervous system. That may sound like science fiction today, but medical research that is aimed at restoring people's senses of sight, sound, and touch is already exploring the concept. And once you've disconnected your body from your brain, who's to say what's real and what's virtual?

Heads Up

Home VR isn't all hype. Several companies are manufacturing HMDs that, while not cheap, are within the range of a dedicated technophile. Look for full reviews of these and other VR products in future issues. Until then, be sure to try (for several hours) before you buy, or what sounds cool could leave you cold.

CyberMaxx

Stereoscopic display, stereo

sound, head tracking (VictorMaxx Technologies; 708-267-0007; \$799).

7th Sense

Monoscopic display, stereo sound, head tracking (Virtual Entertainment Systems; 914-631-9400; \$399)

i-glasses!

Stereoscopic display, stereo sound, head tracking, see-through displays (Virtual I/O; 800-646-3759; \$599)

Forte VFX1 Head Mounted Display System

Stereoscopic display, stereo sound, head tracking, and microphone (Forte Technologies; 716-427-8595; \$999).

HMS-EYE2

Stereoscopic display, stereo sound, head-tracking optional (RPI Advanced Technology Group; 415-495-5671; \$1,895)

S.O.S.

Internet Hide-and-Seek

Several times I've tried to connect with various Internet sites listed in magazines—including the David Letterman Top-10 list address E2 printed a while back. And half the time I get a bunch of crap back telling me "mail undeliverable" or "permission denied" or some other B.S. What's up? Are you guys all printing wrong information just to tick off readers?

Earl Vandenberg
Flint, MI

Of course not. We prefer more subtle methods of ticking off readers.

Seriously, the problem here has a little to do with magazine printing schedules (we finish each issue a little while before you buy it) and a lot to do with the fluid nature of the Internet. If you're thinking of the 'Net as the much-ballyhooed "Information superhighway" with defined stops and locations like a real road, you'd better check your map. In fact, the Internet is more like a phone book. If your friend moves two towns over, he changes his phone number, right?

That's what often happens with Internet sites and listservs (locations that mail out lists of information): The sypoc at the site changes jobs or service providers, and the address changes. A recent example is the extremely popular Late Show News, a weekly list maintained by Aaron Barnhart that discusses the late-night talk shows and provides guest lists. Barnhart now puts out LSN through Echo in New York; if you're looking at a list that doesn't say "send subscriptions to listproc@echony.com" and write "subscribe late-show-news YOUR NAME," you've got old information.

A good way to avoid Internet address frustration is to look for "lists of lists," frequently maintained at popular Internet FTP sites (which can theoretically change themselves, although this is more rare); in forum libraries of the popular commercial online services such as CompuServe, America Online, and Prodigy; and through Usenet newsgroups. These tend to be updated to reflect changes and sometimes carry software-

style version numbers. A good example is Myra Wong's List of Music Mailing Lists, a guide to music-oriented listservs that's now up to version 2.0; this is posted regularly to rec.musicinfo and can also be found on the World Wide Web at <http://server.berkeley.edu/~ayukawa/lomml.html>. Also, news.announce.newgroups and news.groups keep tabs on happenings in the world of Usenet and mailing lists.

Finding Golden Oldies

I'm looking for a copy of the original King's Quest from Sierra On-Line, but it's been out of print forever. Does anyone sell older, out-of-print games for PCs?

Bob Meyers
Indianapolis, IL



Sometimes the oldies are the goodies—especially if you have a lower-end machine or if the copy-protected disk of your favorite old game just got mangled by the dog.

One of the best places to find out-of-print games is online. Gamers often post used games for sale in the gaming forums on CompuServe, America Online, and in the Internet's Usenet newsgroups. Just be sure you get the whole game—manuals, copy protection materials, and disks. Buy copies of disks without manuals or with photocopies of copy protection schemes, and you could

Internet frustration,
golden oldies,
and hurtin' hardware.

be considered a software pirate.

If you can't find what you want by surfing the net, a few firms sell used games. If you're interested in used cartridge and CD-ROM games for set-top boxes like Sega Genesis and 3DO, give Funcloud a call at 612-946-8883. If PC titles are what thrill you, try Gamer's Gold at 800-377-8578. Both companies have thousands of old titles—maybe even that copy of King's Quest you seek.

Hurt Feelings Over Hardware

I have a complaint to lodge against the designers at Origin who created Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger. After more than a year of anticipation (Wing Commander Armada and Privateer just didn't do the trick), I was shocked to learn that Wing Commander III requires, at minimum, a 50MHz 486 PC. Origin should have built an on-game option to downgrade graphics, sound, or whatever and not expect the entire gaming community to upgrade their systems just to play along.

Alex Chiang
Oakville, Canada

Would people please stop complaining about game companies that try to use new hardware? Origin has always been known for creating cutting-edge games for high-end game systems. And Wing Commander III does have options that reduce the system requirements by limiting graphics and video resolutions. But they drop the requirements from a Pentium with high-speed graphics to a high-end 486, so if you have a 386 or older low-end 486, you're out of luck.

Game companies are always torn between trying to support older hardware and trying to push the technology envelope to create ever more exciting games. Like it or not, computer gaming is a technology-driven business. We don't want to sound like marketing reps for Intel or Apple, but if a game maker stops producing higher-end products just to keep gamers who can't or won't upgrade happy,

they'll soon be left in the dust by other developers that will shoot for better graphics or faster game play on newer machines.

The average PC being sold today is a 486, and that will probably move up to a Pentium before too long. Why shouldn't a game developer take advantage of the hardware that's currently being purchased in the millions? Game makers are in a highly competitive business, and one way to get an edge is to produce games that simply look and play better than their predecessors. And that often requires taking advantage of better hardware.

I understand that computers are expensive, but you can upgrade the motherboard in a 386 to a 486 for about \$500, and Pentium prices are due to drop several hundred dollars this summer. If you honestly can't afford that, consider getting some older games from the sources mentioned earlier.

I Encode, UUEncode

I've heard I can send programs across e-mail systems using some tool that converts binary to text. Is this true?

Jan Erikson

Austin, TX

The most common standard for converting binary files, such as programs and graphics, to text is called UUEncoding. UUEncoding translates a file into ASCII text that can be pasted into a mail message. The recipient then uses a UUEncoder to convert it back to the original form. Shareware UUEncoding tools are available for almost every platform, including Mac and PC. Look for them in the communication utilities areas of online services like CompuServe and America Online. Just be warned: UUEncoding a file will increase its size by around a third, and many e-mail systems place limits on how big a file you can send. Some UUEncoding tools can break files into smaller pieces; the recipient must then reassemble them in order and decode the entire file.

Fax, mail, or e-mail your queries to the S.O.S. staff at:

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Sorry, but we can't send personal responses to every question.

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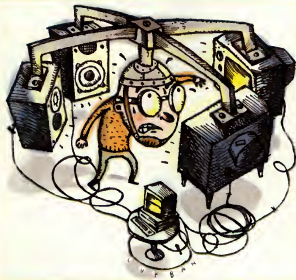


ILLUSTRATION BY ANTHONY LUSKIN

PENTIUM, SCHMENTIUM

We've gotten some definitive reports on the flawed Pentium, and it seems that the cuckoo chip has been causing bizarre effects in some computer games:

Monsters in *Doom II* offer cookies and milk.
Vietnam War discs now say we won.
Magic Carpet turns into a 747.
Myst makes sense.

The Internet Song

A host is a host from coast to coast
And no one will talk to a host that close
Unless the host (that isn't close)
Is busy, hung, or dead.

(Heard on the Internet and sung to the tune of the theme from *Mr. Ed*)

A + B ≠ C

Doom II is a souped-up version of the original. TIE Fighter is the same ol' X-Wing, except you don't want to save the Rebel Alliance, but crush it like a bug. And each successive *SimCity* is just a new variation of the classic.

B-o-o-o-o-o-r-ing.

Just two years after the "multimedia revolution" began, developers are already running out of ideas. We got to thinking: What if they found inspiration by combining some of today's successful titles? F'rinstance...

Myst and Doom II



You're dropped onto a gorgeously rendered deserted island, filled with haunting music and strange puzzles. You must seek out the mysterious inhabitants and blow them to a bloody pulp with a double-barreled shotgun.

Dr. Ruth's Encyclopedia of Sex and Rebel Assault

Each time the good doctor says "penis," you get to plug her with a blaster.

Links Pro 386 and Blown Away

Plaid pants and duotone shoes aren't the only alarming things on this golf course. Some lunatic has slipped exploding golf balls into the club bags—it's up to you to track him down before taking that fatal swing.

Dennis Miller's That's News To Me and Sharks

Insufferable comic Miller does the news from the bottom of a shark tank. Each time he displays his trademark self-satisfied smirk, the great meat grinders of the deep wipe it off his face—literally!

SimCity and Voyeur

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